Hafa Adai!

EDA awards $19.6M to DOF for new Economic Resiliency Center. PAGE 2

CDC upgrades Guam's COVID-19 alert status to highest level. Page 5

$1

Saipan Tribune

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 173
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 2021
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TINIAN ROAD CLEARING
Equipment Operator Constructionman Ricardo Najera guides Equipment Operator Constructionman Mekai Cross, both assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5, in a front-end loader while clearing debris to improve this stretch of road on Tinian. The U.S. Navy Seabees with NMCB-5's Detail Tinian are paving and repairing residential roads on the island.
U.S. NAVY/EQUIPMENT OPERATOR CONSTRUCTIONMAN DANIEL RYAN RUSHLOW

House rejects Senate budget version

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» 29 days left to enact budget
» Villagomez names conference committee representatives

The House of Representatives rejected yesterday the Senate's version of the $144.84-million budget bill for the CNMI government's operation in fiscal year 2022, triggering the formation of a bicameral conference committee that will be tasked with hammering out a mutually acceptable budget that must be enacted before the fiscal year ends on Sept. 30, 2021.

A total of 15 representatives voted "yes" to House floor leader Rep. Ralph N. Yumul's (R-Saipan) motion to reject

See HOUSE on Page 4

Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian), right, confers with House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), center, and Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan) during a recess in the House session yesterday. Only San Nicolas voted against rejecting the Senate's version of the budget bill for fiscal year 2022.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Last troops exit Afghanistan, ending America's longest war

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan late Monday, ending America's longest war and closing a chapter in military history likely to be remembered for colossal failures, unfulfilled promises and a frantic final exit that cost the lives of more than 180 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members, some barely older than the war.

Hours ahead of President Joe Biden's Tuesday deadline for shutting down a final airlift, and thus ending the U.S.

See TROOPS on Page 4

1 more positive in CNMI; 35 hospitalized in Guam

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One more incoming traveler was confirmed positive for COVID-19, according to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. yesterday. The case brings the CNMI's total to 242.

RELATED NEWS
➤ CDC upgrades Guam's COVID-19 alert status to highest level. **PAGE 5**

See POSITIVE on Page 4

AT A GLANCE
As of 6:07pm, Aug. 31, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated:	78.3%
Days since last community transmission	161

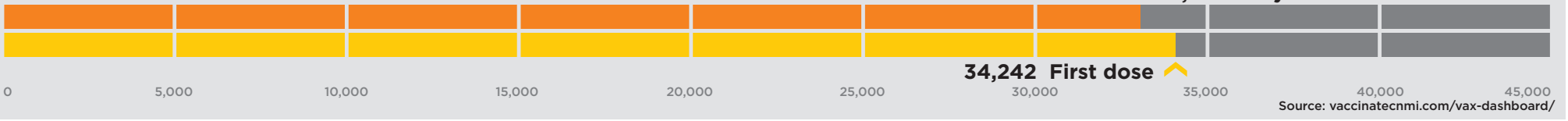
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	29,445
Fully Vaccinated:	28,185
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,797
Fully Vaccinated:	4,245
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	757

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	10,333	20	10,353
Recovered	8,824	26	8,850
Active	1,338	20	1,358
Deaths	145	0	145

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	241	1	242
Traced via Travel Screening	204	1	205
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

BUSINESS
The European Union recommends reinstating restrictions on tourists from the United States.
PAGE 11

NATION
Hurricane Ida traps thousands of people in Louisiana and ravaged the state's electrical grid.
PAGE 12

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING
Looking to make a bold, elegant statement? Black is a color that is more popular than ever.
PAGE 14

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

EDA awards $19.6M to DOF for new Economic Resiliency Center

The US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration awarded $19.6 million to the CNMI Department of Finance yesterday for the construction of a new Economic Resiliency Center that's needed to ensure continuity of government operations and support business growth. The EDA grant is expected to create 1,500 jobs.

FEMA HOUSING PROGRAM

Eric M. Hofschneider is the owner of the first house on Tinian completed under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Permanent Housing Program. According to FEMA, 10 more Tinian residents are participating in the program and 157 households Commonwealth-wide. The Permanent Housing Program was made available to individuals whose homes were destroyed or damaged, when Super Typhoon Yutu struck the Marianas in 2018. Photo and text taken from the Facebook page of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The $19.6-million competitive grant award is one of the largest economic development grant awards to a state or territory in the history of the EDA, according to an Office of the Governor news statement yesterday.

"We are tremendously grateful to the EDA for their partnership as we continue to recover from the devastating effects of Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres. "This new economic business center for the Department of Finance will enhance the CNMI's ability to rebuild its economy in the long-term by creating a true one-stop shop concept, improving our current business processes, assisting small businesses, and serving as an incubator for the development of new industries to diversify our economy."

He said part of his administration's goal is to create jobs for the CNMI's citizens "and this grant funding from EDA will certainly help us create these jobs and retain talent here on our islands."

Torres praised Finance Secretary David Atalig and his team at the Department of Finance "for seeing this project through. *Un dangkulu na si yu'us ma'ase yan ghilisow* for our community's support as we create a stronger economy with this competitive grant award for years to come."

Atalig

Atalig said the management of the CNMI's economy is a top priority for the Department of Finance and the CNMI's Yutu experience highlighted the importance of ensuringe disaster preparedness and quick recovery response. "I am so thankful for the U.S. Economic Development Administration for its partnership in rebuilding our economy and resiliency for our Commonwealth. This is truly a big win for the CNMI as we work to make it easier to do business in the Marianas," said Atalig.

A separate statement quoted Commerce Secretary Gina M. Raimondo as saying, "The Biden Administration is committed to helping the Northern Mariana Islands build back better from the damage caused by Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018. This critical investment will help to ensure the continuity of critical business-focused government operations in the event of future natural disasters, and that this community can more fully recover from the last one."

This project is funded by the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-20), which provided EDA with $600 million in additional Economic Adjustment Assistance Program funds for disaster relief and recovery for areas affected by Hurricanes Florence, Michael, and Lane, Typhoons Yutu and Mangkhut, wildfires, volcanic eruptions, and other major natural disasters occurring in calendar year 2018, and tornadoes and floods occurring in calendar year 2019, under the Robert T. Stafford Act. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CPA implements new way to assess rent

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has approved a new method to assess the rent that airlines pay CPA.

According to CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, the board recently approved a new method to assess the rental rates imposed on airlines that do business at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

"The board approved the final adoption of our new methodology for assessing rates at the airport. The current methodology is outdated and most U.S. jurisdictions have adopted what we…will be implementing. It's considered best practice as far as the industry is concerned," said King-Hinds.

Essentially, the new method would determine rates by the number of square feet used, among other factors, as opposed to the former method that was based on the number of passengers aboard each flight.

"The new methodology will charge terminal rental rates based on square footage, landing fee, and per use. What this means is that all users will pay their fair share depending on their usage. So rates are set to allow for full cost recovery from all users instead of the current methodology, which

See CPA on Page 4

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STOCK #: SP21R0094
Trans: 8-Speed Automatic w/OD, FWD
Mileage: 39,163
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Sr5 w/ 3rd row, Trans: 5-speed Automatic Transmission, Mileage: 63,245
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STOCK #: SP21P0100
Trans: 5-Speed Automatic w/OD, 4WD
Mileage: 50,049
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STOCK #: SP21T0119
Trans: 5-Speed Automatic w/OD, 4WD
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Alleged Peeping Tom sues newspapers, CNMI government

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who is facing charges of stalking and disturbing the peace is suing the CNMI government, the Department of Public Safety, and two newspaper publications for alleged defamation, slander, and violation of his constitutional rights.

Brandon M. Rangamar, 48, has filed a lawsuit with the U.S District Court for the NMI against the CNMI government, DPS, *Saipan Tribune*, and *Marianas Variety* following the publication of his mugshot and details of his ongoing case.

Rangamar was arrested back in April for allegedly looking through a bathroom window while a woman was showering.

According to the lawsuit he filed representing himself, Rangamar claims that the publication of the case against him caused him and his family stress, embarrassment, and loss of possible employment.

He takes issue with CNMI government for allowing the publication of damaging information of crimes still pending court proceedings. "The CNMI government permits a law that any worldwide or local entity to broadly publish damaging detailed information of crimes still pending court proceedings," he said.

As for DPS, he is suing DPS for publicly embarrassing him by releasing his photo and details about his case. "The CNMI police department publicly embarrassed me by posting my photo and damaging, detailed information of my alleged crime on Facebook on April 7, 2021," he said.

Rangamar is suing *Saipan Tribune* and *Marianas Variety* for defamation and slander, accusing both newspapers of published headlines "with careless defamation and slander."

For relief, Rangamar wants the court to order a correction of the law that permits the release of case information, order the defendants to issue public apologies, and for the defendants to pay for all court fees and punitive damages.

"This has caused me and my immediate family members a lot of stress, embarrassment, loss of possible employment, and loss of motivation to function as a regular citizen. I now live daily in fear of the CNMI government, CNMI police, and CNMI citizens for possible unlawful retaliation. I ask this court to order responsible defendants to publicly apologize to my name and pay all entitled punitive or exemplary money damages. I humbly ask this court to intervene and make a quick resolution that I may resume living a normal life, not living in embarrassment and fear," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, DPS received a 911 call on Feb. 21, 2021, at about 7:37pm reporting a stalking incident in the Chalan Lau Lau area. The caller told police that Rangamar had been looking through the bathroom window while she was taking a shower. Rangamar was arrested and brought to the Department of Corrections.

During a follow-up investigation by police, the victim stated that this was not the first incident with the same suspect. Sometime in November 2020, the victim woke up to Rangamar sitting by her bed. She immediately told him to leave and, after several attempts on her part to make him leave, he finally left. Another incident occurred about a month later, the victim said, when she was cooking lunch in her home. The suspect allegedly came in and hugged the victim from behind in a tight manner. The victim asked Rangamar to leave before she calls for police assistance.

On April 7, 2021, a complaint and affidavit of probable cause for the issuance of an arrest warrant for Rangamar for the charges of disturbing the peace and stalking was prepared and signed by CNMI Superior Court Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio with a cash bail set at $7,500.

TROOPS

From Page 1

war, Air Force transport planes carried a remaining contingent of troops from Kabul airport. Thousands of troops had spent a harrowing two weeks protecting the airlift of tens of thousands of Afghans, Americans and others seeking to escape a country once again ruled by Taliban militants.

In announcing the completion of the evacuation and war effort. Gen. Frank McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command, said the last planes took off from Kabul airport at 3:29 p.m. Washington time, or one minute before midnight in Kabul. He said a number of American citizens, likely numbering in "the very low hundreds," were left behind, and that he believes they will still be able to leave the country.

AP

A U.S military aircraft takes off from the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken put the number of Americans left behind at under 200, "likely closer to 100," and said the State Department would keep working to get them out. He praised the military-led evacuation as heroic and historic and said the U.S. diplomatic presence would shift to Doha, Qatar.

Biden said military commanders unanimously favored ending the airlift, not extending it. He said he asked Blinken to coordinate with international partners in holding the Taliban to their promise of safe passage for Americans and others who want to leave in the days ahead.

POSITIVE

From Page 1

The individual was identified by travel screening and confirmed positive through arrival testing on Aug. 30, and since then has been quarantined and actively monitored. CHCC's Communicable Disease Investigation/Inspection team has already initiated contact tracing for those who were in most immediate contact with the individual.

CHCC also reports that there is only one active hospitalization.

As of yesterday, in the CNMI there have been a total of 242 confirmed COVID-19 cases, two deaths, and one active hospitalization.

In Guam, its Joint Information Center said Monday that there are currently 35 individuals hospitalized in the territory due to COVID-19, and that 21 of the 35 are unvaccinated. The JIC also announced that Guam reported 114 new positive cases, with Guam's Department of Public Health and Social Services reporting 20 cases, and 94 cases identified "as a result of complete analysis and case submissions from other clinics for preliminary COVID-19 test results."

As of Monday, in Guam there have been 10,353 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 145 deaths, and 35 active hospitalizations.

CPA

From Page 3

relies on passengers. The rates set will be determined by CPA's needs for that fiscal year so the rates may go up and down within a fiscal year, depending on that need," she said.

By implementing this new method, the rates for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota commuter terminal will be significantly less than the main international terminal, King-Hinds said. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

HOUSE

From Page 1

the Senate version of House Bill 22-74. Only Rep. Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian) voted "no" to rejecting the bill. Absent at the House session, but excused were Reps. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) Joel C. Camacho (R-Saipan), and Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan).

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) then named the House representatives who will be on the conference committee: Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan), and Rep. Leila Staffler (D-Saipan). Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan) was named an alternate.

Senate President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian) is expected to name soon the Senate representatives the conference committee.

A conference committee refers to a joint committee appointed by the House speaker and the Senate president to resolve disagreements on a specific bill. In this case, the conference committee will be working on a deadline to ensure that they come up with a budget that the Legislature will pass and bring to the table of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres before the end of the month. Without a budget for the new fiscal year, the CNMI government will be forced to shut down.

During yesterday's discussions, Manglona said they appreciate the Senate's speedy review and approval of certain provisions of the budget that the House had proposed, but there are several provisions that they're concerned about and would like to address in the conference committee, particularly the salary adjustments for Cabinet members.

Manglona pointed out that, while the House approved the governor's American Rescue Plan Act spending plan, current law sets a cap on salaries, so even by approving Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' spending plan, there's still a law in place that would not allow any certain individuals to go beyond the cap.

He noted that in the Senate version, they approved any salary adjustment and they've also taken out section 604 overtime payments, which will now essentially allow those that are affected by this cap to receive any additional payments.

Manglona said they also heard in public comments that there may be a concern regarding certain individuals and their salary increases and so that's one of the issues that they would like to address in the conference committee.

Lastly, he said, the $2.6 million that was taken from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s subsidy, they will need to address where those funds would go, or how can they put some money back into CHCC.

Additionally, Manglona said, they also received communications from the Marianas Visitors Authority, which stated that while they did not submit any comments at the time of the passing of this bill in the House, after seeing the Senate's version they have reached out and have requested that their request be considered.

"And so that's something that we can bring up to the conference committee," he said.

Manglona said his Way and Means Committee urged colleagues to reject the Senate's bill and they will bring this up to the Senate and see where they can compromise.

Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan) said that, although there are some amendments made by the Senate that he agrees with, such as the restoration of local funding for the scholarship office, there were some amendments that he does not actually necessarily support such as the $2.6 million subsidy that was cut from CHCC.

"Therefore, my vote for the record will be yes for rejection," Rep. John Paul Sablan said.

Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan) asked Rep. Manglona if he has any information from the Senate on the rationale for all these $1 contingencies in the municipalities. Manglona replied that they have not obtained any clarification about that and so that is another thing that they would like to address in the conference committee.

Demapan echoed Rep. John Paul Sablan's position that he appreciates the restoration of the scholarship fund, but he does not appreciate removing the CHCC fund. "I was kind of looking forward to a budget that we can all agree upon, but this one is hard to swallow at this point," Demapan added.

When asked why he voted "no" to rejecting the Senate's version, Rep. San Nicolas said this was because the mayor of the second senatorial and members of the legislative delegation (Tinian and Aguiguan) were satisfied with the funding allocated under the Senate version.

San Nicolas said it is his understanding based on Manglona's explanation that many of the lawmakers' concerns was the cut made on the CHCC budget and not the funds allocated to the second senatorial district.

"It is my hope that the end product of the conference committee [will be] that funds allocated to the 2nd senatorial district remain, so that we can provide the necessary services to our people in the 2nd senatorial district," he said.

San Nicolas, however, said he welcomes any additional funding if both chambers come to an agreement.

San Nicolas said he was compelled to support the Senate version, considering that the Senate gave additional funds to the second senatorial district.

From the $144,848,801 total identified budgetary resources for fiscal year 2022 and minus debt service, this leaves the government $98,897,301 that's available for appropriation. Including the $4,487,022 budget for the Department of Public Lands, the grand total revenue available for appropriation is $103,384,323.

With $175 million in ARPA funds, senators appropriated $278,384,323 in combined general local funds and ARPA funds.

The Senate's version says that the Legislature concurs with Torres' use of ARPA, as provided in Volume 4 of the governor's annual budget submission of April 2021 as amended in July 2021, and the ARPA Section 602 to fund salary adjustments for government employees for Fiscal Year 2022.

What the Senate did was they take Volume 4 of the governor's submission of the ARPA funds and embedded the amounts in the budgets of the departments and agencies and municipalities and the different branches of government.

Saipan Fitbeat Lions Club holds Charter and Induction Night

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Fitbeat Lions Club's newly-inducted officers share a photo during the club's Charter and Induction Night last Friday at the Saipan World Resort Royal Taga Ballroom. Also pictured, seated third from left, is Philippine honorary consul Glicerio "Eli" Arago. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Saipan Fitbeat Lions Club held a joint celebration last Friday, celebrating both the club's official recognition as a Lions Club and its induction of new officers for the 2021-2022 Lion Year. Notable guests last Friday included Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, first lady Diann Torres, Lions Club International District 204 Gov. Saturnino "Atoy" Banting, and Philippine honorary consul Glicerio "Eli" Arago. Diann Torres, who was reportedly the first to bring "Fitbeat" to Saipan, was the event's keynote speaker.

In a phone call with him yesterday, Ambet Flores, who is the club's vice president and was the chairman of the committee that planned last Friday's event, said the Saipan Fitbeat Lions Club was chartered and officially recognized as an official Lions Club last year, but the celebration was pushed to last Friday as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the club having planned many events last year. Flores said the event had almost 140 guests, and that he was very pleased with how the event went.

"It was a joyful event. We got off a little bit from the traditional presentation of all the members and officers. ...Traditionally, the presentation is solemn and silent [but] we were loud. ...We had a lot of prizes that we gave away, and all of the attendees were, of course, happy with that. For me as VP, I should say it was a huge success," said Flores.

CDC upgrades Guam's COVID-19 alert status to highest level

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention upgraded Guam on Monday to its highest Risk Assessment Level for COVID-19 to Level 4, lumping the island territory with six other countries where CDC advises against traveling to these destinations.

Guam joins six other countries—Azerbaijan, Estonia, North Macedonia, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, and Switzerland— at the top of the CDC's regularly-updated list of high-risk destinations for travelers. The CDC advises against travel to these destinations, but for those who must travel the CDC advises travelers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 first.

Guam has recently been posting triple digit numbers of positive COVID-19 cases: Aug. 25, 147 new cases; Aug. 26, 108 new cases; and Aug. 29, 179 new cases.

For fully-vaccinated travelers to Guam and the six other Level 4 destinations, the CDC recommends wearing a mask over the nose and mouth while in transit, and after travel self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms and following all state and local recommendations or requirements.

For unvaccinated travelers, the CDC recommends getting tested one to three days before traveling. While in transit the CDC advises wearing a mask over the nose and mouth, maintaining six-foot distance from others and avoiding crowds, and regularly sanitizing one's hands. Upon arrival, the CDC advises unvaccinated travelers to get tested within three to five days after travel, avoiding contact with those who can be at risk of severe illness, and following all state and local recommendations or requirements.

The CDC's COVID-19 Level scale goes from Level 1: Low to Level 4: Very High. For destinations with populations over 100,000, there has to have been more than 500 new cases of COVID-19 over the past 28 days per 100,000 population to be determined as a Level 4 destination, according to the CDC's criteria found on its website. The CNMI is ranked at Level 1: Low.

The CDC's regularly-updated list tracking COVID-19 risk in destinations, and further information on COVID-19 can be found at https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/noticescovid19.

Sept. 1 is proclaimed Day of Prayer in the CNMI

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres yesterday proclaimed Sept. 1, 2021, as a Commonwealth Day of Prayer as a mark of solemn respect for U.S. military service members who have served and those who continue to serve during the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and to remember the victims of the Aug. 26, 2021, terrorist attack in Kabul, Afghanistan.

In addition, Torres has ordered the flags of the CNMI, together with the flag of the United States of America, to be flown at half-staff within the Commonwealth until sunset today, Sept.1, 2021.

"Over the last 20 years, men and women of the CNMI answered the call of our country to serve in operations within Afghanistan. I have met many who have returned from service in Afghanistan. They have enrolled in the Northern Marianas College, entered back into our private sector workforce, and many are currently continuing to serve the public as members of the CNMI government workforce," said Torres.

"There are those who answered the call to serve our nation that never returned home. In the national conversation, many are asking whether these sacrifices have been worth it. While I cannot speak to the individual struggles of each of our brave service members, I can say that the entire Commonwealth and I are proud of their service to our country and their commitment to the goals and ideals of our great nation.

"I have spoken to many who have served in the recent days on the end of this long war. The emotions are mixed and there is no single sentiment that is shared by all. However, as a community we should commemorate these brave service members and acknowledge that their contributions to our nation will never be forgotten.

"With so much still ongoing, and with many of our brothers and sisters still in service, I am calling on our community to join in prayer and commemoration for all our men and women who have served and continue to serve in our nation's military," he said.

Torres noted that with the gracious support of Bishop Ryan Jimenez and the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs, universal prayers are scheduled to begin today, Sept. 1, 2021, and last through the month of September, beginning with a mass intention today at the 6pm Mass at Mount Carmel Cathedral.

"I invite the community to join in the commemoration of our service members during this time," Torres said. "These past several years have been trying for the Commonwealth, with natural disasters and a global pandemic, and through it our country has been a lifeline for our continued recovery. Our citizenship comes with benefits and responsibilities, and the greatest responsibility of placing our lives on the front line for the ideals of this nation has been shouldered by the brave men and women who have and continue to serve in our nation's military. I thank them and will continue to pray for them and their families as we look to the end of this long engagement in Afghanistan."

The public is invited to participate in today's 6pm Mass at Mount Carmel Cathedral and is encouraged to observe the Commonwealth Day of Prayer with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities in their houses of worship and communities. ***(PR)***

Kilili: Apply now for a service academy nomination

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is now accepting applications for nominations to U.S. military service academies. The deadline to apply for a congressional nomination is Dec. 10, 2021, for the school year beginning in the fall of 2022.

"The U.S. service academies offer a wealth of opportunity for our young people, including a fully-funded undergraduate education and a commission as a U.S. military officer upon graduation," Sablan said. "There are vacancies at the service academies specifically reserved for Northern Marianas students. Applying for a congressional nomination is the first step towards attending one of these academies."

The service academies are all top-ranked colleges that offer an excellent education as well as the opportunity to serve as a leader in the U.S. armed forces. Service academy graduates receive a bachelor's degree and are commissioned as second lieutenants or ensigns upon graduation, with a commitment to serve in the armed forces for at least five years.

To be eligible for a congressional nomination and appointment to a service academy, an individual must be a U.S. citizen, between 17 and 23 years of age, unmarried, and have no dependents. Highly qualified applicants will be able to demonstrate a well-rounded record of academic excellence, physical fitness, leadership, and service. While a congressional nomination is a requirement for four of the five service academies, final decisions are made by the academies' admissions officials.

Sablan

During Sablan's time in office, he has passed legislation adding six academy positions for Marianas students. For the school year starting in the fall of 2022, three slots are open at the Military Academy in West Point, New York; two at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; and one at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. In addition, one Marianas student is eligible for admission to the Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

The Coast Guard Academy's admissions process is competitive nationwide and does not reserve vacancies per state, nor does it require a congressional nomination; however, Sablan may submit letters of recommendation.

The congressional office will host virtual information sessions about the service academies and nomination process on Sept. 16, 2021, at 3:30pm ChST and on Oct.14, 2021, at 3:30pm ChST. Interested individuals can RSVP by calling the Saipan district office at (670) 323-2647. Free informational sessions are also available for high school and college groups upon request. Additionally, the congressional office can help prospective applicants connect with military academy graduates and cadets to learn more about the admissions process and academy life.

Applications for service academy nominations are available on the congressional office's website, sablan.house.gov, and at the congressional district offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Completed application packets should be delivered to any of the district offices by Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. For more information, contact the congressional office at (670) 323-2647, email kilili@mail.house.gov, or visit sablan.house.gov. ***(PR)***

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO BID

MVA-ITB-21-2040

Acquisition of Riding Mower for MVA Tinian and MVA Rota

Submission /Closing Date: **September 15, 2021** **Time: 3:00PM (ChST)**

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 50086, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested firms may pick up the Scope of Work on or after **September 01, 2021** at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Bids submitted from firms outside the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified Courier mail service by **September 15, 2021** and must be received by MVA within seven (7) working days of that date. Bidders from outside the CNMI must notify the MVA Procurement Officer, Ms. Lenette Maratita in writing of their intent to bid in order to receive the additional seven (7) days for the receipt of the actual Bid Documents. This notice of intent to bid may be submitted by any mode of written communication including facsimile to (670) 664-3237 or emailed to lmaratita@mymarianas.com. Notification of intent to bid must be received by MVA no later than **3:00PM** Chamorro Standard Time (ChST) on **September 10, 2021** and must reference **"MVA-ITB-21-2040"** on the subject line.

/s/ Ellsbeth Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
Managing Director, MVA

Faith, Hope and KARIDAT

A Northern Mariana Islands Social Service
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(1) HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASE COORDINATOR / SHELTER SUPERVISOR
(1) VICTIM HOTLINE COORDINATOR

For more information, job description and application can be obtained from Karidat Main Office in Chalan Kanoa.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED: Completed application form, copy of diploma/degree, resume/bio-data; current police clearance within 6 months and a copy of valid CNMI driver's license.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE.
CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2021 AT 4:00PM

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM-155

SUBMISSION DATE: SEPTEMBER 17, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"LEASE OF ONE (1) MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER/COPIER/ SCANNER MACHINE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH COVID-19 EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE (CCERA) PROGRAM"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

Name: Ignacia L. Evangelista
and Manuel N. Evangelista
Address: P.O. Box 503393
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: 233-6183

Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re the Matter of the Petition for the Appointment of General Guardianship for: Y.L.P Y.L.P Minor Child By: Ignacia L. Evangelista and Manuel N. Evangelista Petitioner	FCD-GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 21-0323 **NOTICE OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on December 27, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 4th day of August, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

ROBERT T. TORRES
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758 CK, Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 234-78459
Facsimile: (670) 234-5749
Attorney for Petitioner Colleen V. Manglona

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MANUEL BORJA VILLAGOMEZ, Decedent.	Civil Action No. 21- 0234 NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS Date: September 16, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m. Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE MANUEL BORJA VILLAGOMEZ OR HIS ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **Collen V. Manglona** has filed a petition the Superior Court of Northern Marianas Islands to **PETITION TO ADMIT ESTATE INTO PROBATE AND APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATRIX** for the Estate of Manuel Borja Villagomez, the deceased. The attorney for Petitioner is **Robert T. Torres**, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plate Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya) P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. All interested persons and entities should appear at the hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or her Estate are hereby required by the law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claims should also be sent to **ROBERT T. TORRES**, Attorney at Law, at the address herein- above indicated.

Respectfully submitted this 16th day of August 2021.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

RFQ NO.: RFQ21-DOF/OIT-162

SUBMISSION DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M

"PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE CNMI GOVERNMENT REVENUE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFQ CAN BE MADE TO MR. JOSEPH O. TORRES, OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, ACTING CHIEF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, AT 670-322-1418 OR VIA E-MAIL AT j.torres@dof.gov.mp by 4:30 P.M. SEPTEMBER 03, 2021.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ DAVID DLG. ATALIG
SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP NO.: RFP21-DOF/OIT-163

SUBMISSION DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M

"REVENUE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (RMIS) FOR THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP CAN BE MADE TO MR. JOSEPH O. TORRES, OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, ACTING CHIEF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, AT 670-322-1418 OR VIA E-MAIL AT j.torres@dof.gov.mp.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ DAVID DLG. ATALIG
SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

WIC recognized by USDA for improving CNMI breastfeeding rate

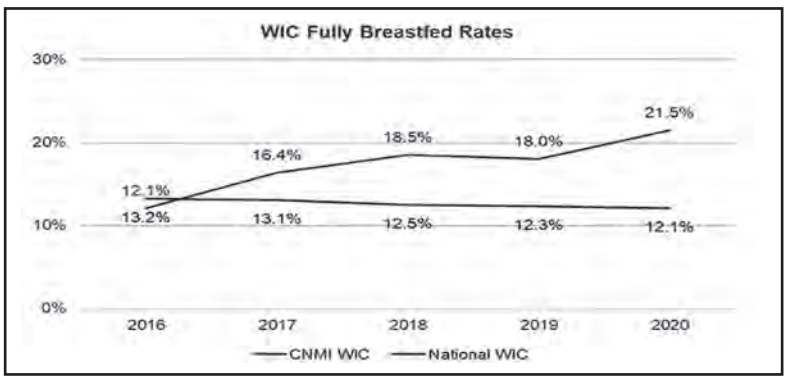
The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, more commonly known as the CNMI WIC program, was again named by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as one of its 2021 WIC Breastfeeding Performance Bonus Award winners for its efforts in keeping the breastfeeding rates high in the CNMI.

Among CNMI WIC participants who fully breastfed—meaning infants of participating breastfeeding women who do not receive infant formula from the WIC program—the 2020 breastfeeding rate went up 3.5 percentage points to 21.5% when compared to 2019's rate of 18%.

The CNMI WIC program will receive approximately $2,000 for its accomplishments, and plans to use this funding to create a breastfeeding space at the Commonwealth Health Center, similar to the WIC clinic's space.

The Surgeon General's call to action in 2011 to support breastfeeding stated, "Only through the support of family members, communities, clinicians, health care systems, and employers will we be able to make breastfeeding become the easy choice, the default choice."

WIC program administrator Erin Camacho echoes this sentiment, that "with proper support and guidance, we can meet mothers and babies where they are at with their breastfeeding journeys." ***(PR)***



Madero makes case for territorial equality to Supreme Court

In June, President Joe Biden made news when he promised residents of U.S. territories that "there can be no second-class citizens in the United States of America" on the same day his Department of Justice filed a brief before the Supreme Court in *United States v. Vaello Madero* arguing that otherwise eligible citizens can be denied Supplemental Security Income simply because they happen to live in Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories. Yesterday, Vaello Madero—who was stripped of his SSI benefits after moving from New York to Puerto Rico—filed a powerful response that the continuing denial of SSI benefits is not just unconstitutional, but would represent a dangerous continuation of the *Insular Cases*' doctrine of "separate and unequal" status for residents of U.S. territories. Last year a unanimous panel of the First Circuit upheld a district court ruling that the continued denial of SSI benefits in Puerto Rico was unconstitutional.

"Mr. Vaello Madero makes a compelling case that the continuing denial of SSI in Puerto Rico and other territories simply cannot be squared with the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection," said Neil Weare, president and founder of Equally American, which supports equality for the 3.5 million citizens living in U.S. territories—98% of whom are racial or ethnic minorities. "This historic case will once again provide the Supreme Court the choice to either turn the page on continued discrimination against citizens in the territories who remain politically disenfranchised or continue the dark legacy of the *Insular Cases*."

The *Insular Cases* are a series of racist early-1900s decisions decided shortly after *Plessy v. Ferguson* that all three branches of the federal government have relied on to support continued inequality in U.S. territories. Last year the Supreme Court narrowed and criticized the Insular Cases, but stopped short of overruling them. The U.S. House of Representatives is currently considering a resolution that condemns any continued reliance on the *Insular Cases*. Biden and his Justice Department have yet to make their position on the *Insular Cases* known.

"All three branches of the federal government should expressly condemn any continued reliance on the *Insular Cases* to defend inequality in U.S. territories," Weare said. "It's time the *Insular Cases* be placed in the dustbin of history alongside *Plessy* and *Korematsu* where they belong."

Next week Equally American plans to file an amicus brief in support of Madero's case, along with a number of other national civil rights organizations. The United States has until Sept. 29, 2021, to reply to Madero and the scores of amicus briefs expected in the case. Oral argument is not yet scheduled, but will likely be in December or January.

Madero is represented pro bono by a team at Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle LLP. ***(PR)***

Kilili: $20M EDA grant could increase financial accountability, transparency

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) congratulated the Commonwealth's Department of Finance yesterday on the award of $19,630,360 to build a new office center and acquire a modern financial management system. The funding, through the U.S. Economic Development Administration, was made available by Sablan's work on the 2019 disaster recovery legislation, Public Law 116-20.

"Bringing the Commonwealth's financial management system into the 21st century can improve service to everyone who transacts business with the government from taxpayers to businesses to contractors looking for payment," Sablan said. "It should also make financial data from the Commonwealth government more reliably and quickly accessible, improving accountability and transparency, something we are all very concerned with."

Yesterday's grant brings the total of EDA disaster recovery funding for the Marianas from Public Law 116-20 to $88 million. Earlier grants for Super Typhoon Yutu recovery were awarded to Northern Marianas College for new buildings to house a workforce training center and CREES and to the Governor's office for Garapan revitalization and a sports complex in Susupe.

Sablan said the Finance Department grant, originally submitted in February 2020, was closely scrutinized by EDA legal team because of restrictions on funding government operations. "The congressional office met with EDA at the regional office in Seattle and headquarters in [Washington], D.C. to make the case for awarding the funds to update the financial management system," Sablan said. "Once this system is in place, it should be much easier for the Legislature and granting agencies to track exactly how every dollar of federal funding for the Marianas is used." ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
p.o. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 Fax: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

ON AN APPLICATION FOR A QUALIFYING CERTIFICATE AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT AND REBATE OF CERTAIN CNMI TAXES

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that:

A. ***Public hearing.*** In accordance with the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and pursuant to the rule-making procedures of the Administrative Procedures Act, the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority (CEDA) will conduct a public hearing at the *New Cafeteria Building, next to Building D, Marianas High School, Bwaay Lane, Susupe, Saipan*, on *Friday, September 24, 2021*, at *5:00 p.m.*, on the application of *Marshall Holdings CNMI LLC*, Applicant for a Qualifying Certificate, which request is for tax relief by way of abatement and rebate of CNMI taxes in consideration of Applicant's proposed *$6.447 million for solar energy production, inter-island ocean transport, import/export and eco-tourism.* All pursuant to the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, as amended, and as set out in the Applicant's application for a Qualifying Certificate.

B. ***Nature of hearing.*** This hearing shall be open to the public. Oral or written statements will be received from anyone wishing to testify thereat, which statement will be incorporated into the records of the hearing.

C. ***Further Information.*** For further information, please contact CEDA at the above telephone numbers or visit its office at the CEDA Building, Beach Road, Oleai, Saipan.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

®

PUBLIC NOTICE

for Hospital Dump Site

Public Information Meeting and Extension of the Public Comment Period

WHO: For the local community and public. Presented by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE)

WHAT: A public meeting to provide an overview of the results of the investigation for the Project named 'Hospital Dump' a Formerly Used Defense (FUDS) site. Based on the results of the investigations, the Government has reviewed the data with Federal, State and local Agencies, and selected the proposed 'No Action' decision.

The proposed 'No Action' decision is based on the conclusions, that the metals found in site soils, (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)-8 metals) do not pose unacceptable risks to human health or the environment. Additionally, Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon (TPH) concentrations in soil above applicable screening levels were successfully removed from the Hospital Dump FUDS site. If after consideration of public comments, this proposed 'No Action' decision is ultimately selected, no further additional investigation, remediation or removal will be performed and USACE will pursue project closeout.

WHEN: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at 5 p.m.

WHERE: 22nd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building, P.O. Box 500586, Saipan, MP 96950

WHY: To present to the public the Proposed Plan to facilitate public involvement in the decision-making process for the Hospital Dump Site (FUDS Project No. H09CN012001), located at Talofofo, Saipan.

HOW: Attend the meeting. To ensure the community's concerns are addressed, the public comment period has been extended from July 20, 2021 to September 30, 2021. In addition, this meeting is being held for the community's attendance. The Proposed Plan and Remedial Investigation Report are available for public review in the Administrative Record file at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library Insatto Street, Susupe, Saipan. During this time, the public is encouraged to submit any written comments regarding the project to:

Project Point of Contact:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Honolulu District
Programs and Project Management Division, Environmental Branch
ATTN: Lori Wong (PM-HDS)
Building 230 / CEPOH-PP-E
Fort Shafter, HI 96858-5440
Fax 808-835-4129
E-mail: FUDS-POH@usace.army.mil

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXI, Issue No. 173
Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A rushed and flawed Afghanistan withdrawal plan assured a tragic outcome

Before Thursday's suicide bombings outside the Kabul airport, President Joe Biden justified his rushed withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan by saying the United States would maintain "over the horizon" capabilities to detect and interdict terrorist activity in Afghanistan. In other words, the United States would ensure, even without a U.S. troop presence on the ground, that Afghanistan would not return to its pre-9/11 status as a terrorist safe haven.

Thursday's deadly attacks, in which 13 U.S. service members died, laid waste to any notion of America's ability to influence events on the ground in Afghanistan. U.S. intelligence resources are gone. Forward operating bases are gone. It's as if the United States cut off its eyes and ears to spite its own face, and now it is blind and deaf to the future threats brewing in Afghanistan.

The group calling itself Islamic State-Khorasan is known for its brutality and utter disregard for civilian lives—not unlike the Taliban itself. Yet the United States now relies on the latter group for security assistance during the withdrawal.

The Taliban has invited the Haqqani network into its new hard-line Islamist government. The network has been on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations since 2012, with multimillion-dollar bounties on the heads of its top leaders. Haqqani militiamen were the Taliban's choice to deploy outside the Kabul airport, putting them in close proximity to their sworn enemies—U.S. troops.

Somehow, this was the security formula Biden accepted in his haste to leave before the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. The deadline was artificially set and had zero strategic value in terms of ensuring a safe and orderly withdrawal. But Biden insisted on it.

He inherited the withdrawal framework from former President Donald Trump, who defied logic by engaging in peace talks with the Taliban while excluding the elected government in Kabul. Everything about Trump's formula ensured a disastrous outcome, imposing minimal Taliban concessions in exchange for a full U.S. withdrawal. Taliban officials spoke as if they were doing a favor to the most powerful military in the world by agreeing not to attack U.S. forces while they were withdrawing.

Biden felt it was more important to keep Trump's word than to rethink this badly flawed deal and come up with a more measured and sensible plan that protected American—not Taliban—interests. Biden now says the United States will retaliate "at the place we choose, and the moment of our choosing." Those are the kinds of tough-sounding words he also should have spoken from the beginning regarding the withdrawal: U.S. forces leave at "the moment of our choosing," not the Taliban's.

By putting the Taliban and Haqqani network in such an undeserved position of power over the United States, a tragic outcome was virtually assured. Sadly on Thursday, that's what Biden got.

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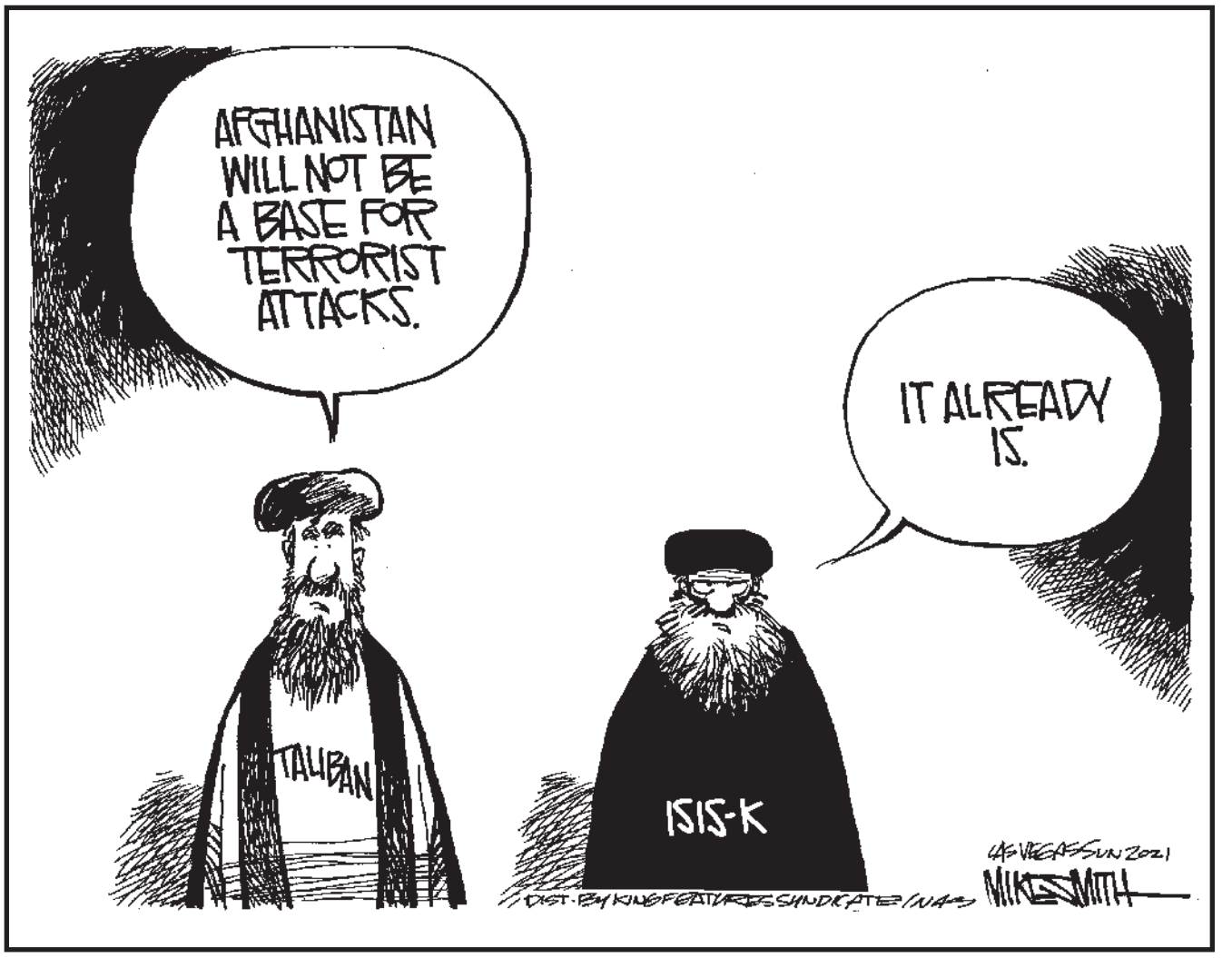


The coming carnage between the Taliban and their jihadist rivals

By RUTH POLLARD
Bloomberg Opinion

Ruth Pollard is a columnist and editor with Bloomberg Opinion*. Previously she was South and Southeast Asia Government team leader at Bloomberg News. She has reported from India and across the Middle East and focuses on foreign policy, defense and security.*

The global jihadist community has had a mixed reaction to the Taliban's remarkable sweep to power in Afghanistan.

Al-Qaida—Osama bin Laden's alma mater—was brimming with enthusiasm, heralding a triumphant new era of Islamic rule that proves jihad, and not the "democracy game," is the way to achieve power. The al-Qaida-linked news agency, the Global Islamic Media Front, released a statement of congratulations that said: "May Allah grant the mujahideen in Somalia, the African Sahel, Yemen, Syria, Pakistan, the Indian subcontinent and everywhere the same victory."

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, the dominant faction in the insurgent-held regions of Syria's Idlib province, was also impressed, describing the Taliban's victory as an example of steadfastness in the face of a foreign occupation.

The Islamic State wasn't so positive.

As Aymenn Jawad Tamimi, a jihadist expert and fellow at the Washington-based Center for Global Policy, notes in his blog, IS has argued the Taliban's actions weren't so much a conquest as a takeover coordinated with the U.S. The Islamic State's path was better, the group argued, because "supporting Islam does not pass through the hotels of Qatar nor the embassies of Russia, China and Iran."

It's here the Taliban may run into some problems of its own. It's already attempting—albeit pretty unsuccessfully so far—to play both sides, trying to keep the international community onside with its promises of a more moderate version of itself—complete with footage of schoolgirls being ushered into classrooms—while its heavily armed soldiers detain rights activists and beat journalists on the streets.

Now there's been an attack at one of the gates of Kabul airport, where thousands have crowded with fistfuls of documents and hopes of a passage to safety. In the lead up to Thursday's blasts, statements from the U.S. and the U.K indicated the main threat was coming from IS-K or the Islamic State of Khorasan, a group affiliated with the organization that overran large parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014 and 2015 with the aim of establishing a so-called caliphate. The target—vulnerable civilians, foreign troops and Taliban fighters—clearly proved too good to pass up.

Established in Afghanistan's east in 2015, IS-Khorasan sees the Taliban as its enemy, and the two groups have clashed repeatedly over the years. While the Taliban is inward looking—its ambitions focused solely on Afghanistan—IS-Khorasan has transnational dreams and draws its new supporters from the ranks of the Taliban who have rejected the U.S.-led the peace process. It's mounted several major assaults on the capital, including back-to-back bombings in 2018 that killed 29 people including nine journalists in the deadliest attack on Afghanistan's media since 2001. Dozens more were killed last year in a 20-hour siege at a prison in the country's east when IS militants attempted to free hundreds of their members.

During the first four months of 2021, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan recorded 77 attacks claimed by or attributed to IS-Khorasan. Their targets? The minority Shia Muslim community, women, civilian infrastructure including a Médecins Sans Frontières maternity ward, and military personnel.

If these two groups do battle, the main victims, as always, will be civilians. They bore the brunt of the Taliban's brutal rule from 1996 to 2001 and then the invasion of U.S. and NATO forces, with their air strikes and ground attacks, and the resurgence in suicide attacks that followed. More than 47,000 Afghan civilians have been killed in the conflict—nearly 1,700 of them in the first six months of this year alone—while an estimated 66,000 military and police have been killed, according to Brown University's Costs of War project.

And then there's the spillover—into Pakistan, Central Asia, China and India. New Delhi is no stranger to cross-border terrorism, and the Taliban will likely provide a haven for anti-Indian terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. There are genuine concerns these groups will use Afghanistan as a base to launch their attacks in Kashmir as they did in the 1990s.

Adding fuel to this fire is the increasing belief—particularly among those who lean toward jihad and violence but are not quite there yet—that politics doesn't work, nor does democracy

See THE COMING on next page

Sailing ahead: A look to NMC's future

By GALVIN DELEON GUERRERO, ED.D.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Galvin Deleon Guerrero, EdD is president of the Northern Marianas College.

Surviving turbulent waters, the Northern Marianas College *proa* has established a rich 40-year legacy of thriving in higher education, providing high quality, affordable and accessible educational programs and services for the people of the Commonwealth.

Building on that legacy, I am extremely excited to share with you my vision for the future of the college.

The next three months

To begin, we will continue assessing what our community needs. This will include workforce needs, innovative approaches to higher education, and expertise to guide the socio-economic and cultural growth of the Commonwealth.

Based on what we learn from our community, we will launch the college's next Strategic Master Plan. This plan will establish clear, concrete, measurable, and meaningful goals and objectives for the college to accomplish in the next three to five years.

Within six months

The college will reinforce its commitment to meeting workforce needs by collaborating with employers to provide accelerated, short-term courses at work sites with more online options. We will customize our programs so that employees can earn certifications or degrees in a way that fits their work schedule, addresses real-world scenarios in their work, and takes less time than campus-based programs.

Recognizing that how we teach is as important as what we teach, the college will also continue improving instructional quality with training, mentoring, monitoring, and accountability measures that will help all instructors become better teachers.

Within one year

From humble beginnings in a few classrooms at Marianas High School through numerous typhoons, the college is finally moving forward with a brand new, state-of-the-art campus at As Terlaje. This new campus will also modernize the IT infrastructure and build technological capacity. Following the great work done by the college's Facilities Planning Group, we will begin implementing our Facilities Master Plan by breaking ground on at least one of the plan's buildings, if not more, within one year.

In addition to new facilities, Informed by our community needs assessment and the new strategic master plan, we will roll out one new bachelor's degree program in time to launch during the 2022-2023 academic year.

The long-term

We will build on the college's proven track record in nursing, business, and education by improving student achievements across the institution. Guided by research into promising practices, we will collaboratively improve or develop preventative programs and interventions to boost retention, program completion, and graduation rates.

In addition to short-term programs that meet immediate workforce needs, we will also expand the research capacity and the number of four-year degree programs. With more research capacity, we can contribute to our Commonwealth's economic, social, and cultural growth. And, by offering more four-year degree programs, we can help our students start smart *and* finish wise right here in the Northern Marianas.

I have no doubt in my mind that we can and we will bring this vision to life. The college *proa* has endured countless challenges, proving that we are PROA STRONG. And in our strength, in our endurance, in our legacy, we have helped thousands of students and countless others in our community lead productive, meaningful, fruitful lives. Indeed, as we sail ahead with a focus on learning first, let us lift the tide for everyone.

Thank you and *biba* NMC!

Masks at school? The kids are fine. It's the parents who are acting like jerks

By KARIN KLEIN
Los Angeles Times

During a recent trip taking my 6-year-old granddaughter to the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, we and other visitors needed not just reservations but also face masks. All visitors except those younger than 2. Indoors and out. No exceptions.

Everyone was obeying. They weren't surreptitiously pulling their masks off once they were in darkened passages or feeding the lorikeets. They weren't slipping their face coverings below their noses. No children were whining about masks despite the heat and humidity of the day. There were no complaints that they couldn't hear or couldn't breathe. When the rules were clear, behaving was simply a given.

I don't pretend that personal anecdotes are reality for everyone. And of course families choose to go to the aquarium, while school is compulsory. But kids have been going to all kinds of places where they wear masks and they've been managing. No one should pretend this is normal for the long term. Still, we give kids far too little credit. They're generally adaptable and able to understand limitations well—at times, it would seem, far better than their parents.

So when Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered mask-wearing inside schools this year—it's optional outdoors—he wasn't doing anything California kids can't handle. Yet the response was lawsuits, because what's a COVID-19 policy without a lawsuit these days? But these court challenges reveal more than a lack of knowledge about the delta variant of the coronavirus. They also display a somewhat hysterical attitude, growing more prevalent among parents of privilege in many arenas, that their children are incapable of suffering any discomfort.

The 5- and 6-year-olds don't know any other reality. And they're fine with it as long as their parents and other hyper-excited adults would calm down.

It's a familiar scenario to me. I used to volunteer at the tide pools, dispensing information about the creatures there but also trying to keep people from ripping sea stars off the rocks and going home with a bucket full of shells. I would point out how the sea anemones used bits of broken shell to protect themselves from sun and dryness, and explain to families that even though taking a single shell seemed harmless, this tide pool draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. If each person took one shell, that would decimate the tide pools.

The kids, accustomed to the idea that the world is a crowded place with finite resources, were always fine with the restrictions. When there was a problem, it was inevitably the parents. How dare I tell them that their children couldn't collect shells and sea stars as they had as little kids? The children would squirm with embarrassment over their parents' unseemly public behavior.

If we worry about becoming an increasingly entitled society of people who think the rules were meant only for other people, we're certainly getting a taste of it as parents complain about every rule that might slightly inconvenience their kids, even if for the good of all. It's more than just masks or COVID-19; kids pick up on what their parents model. How will they have the resilience to keep climate change from decimating the planet—which demands urgent collective sacrifice—if all they see is adult entitlement and selfishness?

Think of it this way: At most schools, kids have to wear closed-toe shoes for safety. They might prefer flip-flops, feeling more comfortable with their toes wiggling in the open air, but that's not the way it goes. Masks are just another part of the school dress code for now.

Jonathan Zachreson of Reopen California Schools, which challenged the mask order, sounded this plaintive note: "A return to a normal school year is crucial to the mental and physical health recovery for students across California who have endured months of isolation."

Absolutely. The last year and a half have been devastating for many California kids. They've missed out socially, academically and physically. They need the normalcy of returning to school . So how about if we make life as close to that as possible, let the state do its job and stop whining about little pieces of fabric?

Don't get me wrong. I wish it were just as safe to do without the masks. Talking to my granddaughter a couple of hours after she'd met her first-grade teacher, I was trying to draw out more than monosyllabic responses.

"What kind of smile does she have?" I asked.

"I don't know," she responded. "I couldn't see it."

Ah. Of course. But she's already getting plenty of social cues from her teacher's gentle manner and emphasis on building social skills and confidence among children who started their formal schooling at home.

California was among the last states to reopen schools on a large scale, even though things were operating pretty safely elsewhere. When cases did pop up in schools, the infection had almost always come from the surrounding communities, not from spread within the classroom.

If we're going to err, let's err on the side of safeguards that maximize the chance that we can keep schools open. No one is sure what we face here. Luckily, because we have vaccines that hold down the likelihood of serious illness, we're not in lockdown and we're no longer emptying our takeout food into home containers. But normal—what we all want to think of as normal—continues to elude us.

There's a lot to learn from COVID-19. We're better informed about how scientists go about their job. We all know the word comorbidity these days, that's for sure. We learned that "health equity," once just a phrase to many, actually means life or death for huge numbers of people.

What we need to do next, for kids if not for ourselves, is learn to stop kvetching and fighting every little step.

Of course, life is not fair. It's not fair that our kids won't have a childhood quite as free and easy as they used to. But they take their cues from us. If we can take all this on the chin, their chances of emerging resilient are much higher.

Parents: You oversaw your kids' education at home for many difficult months. You kept your kids safe, made up games to play and tried to explain the scary to them in terms that wouldn't make them fearful. You held yourselves and your families together. Now is not the time to lose it.

THE COMING

From Page 8

or the nation state as defined by the West. They may see the Taliban as a model and alternative, says Rasha Al Aqeedi, senior analyst and the head of the nonstate actors program at the Newlines Institute in Washington. "Certainly," she says, "the idea will be glorified again and the appetite to do something will be there—and that is always a problem."

Al Aqeedi says IS actions will actually help the new rulers of Kabul. "If anything," she says, "it strengthens the Taliban's positioning as a lesser evil." Just think about that: the Taliban as the lesser evil. If there's anything that symbolizes the failure of the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan, this is it.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Vandalized pavilion

My wife and I joined the Saipan Centennial Lions Club to keep ourselves busy but also we like its motto, which is to serve.

This club has been keeping us busy with a lot of projects such as painting the Koblerville school before classes started. Another was cleaning Micro Beach, which ended with almost two truckloads of trash. Our recent project was behind Townhouse furniture *pantalan*. We cleaned the beach and fixed up the pavilions. We put tiles on the benches and tables. We were all happy. We went back to the pavilion a few days later to celebrate and, to our surprise, it had been vandalized with profane words and littered with beer cans and cigarette butts.

We love Saipan and love assisting the community, so I was deeply saddened and dismayed, after all our hard work on it. We did it out of care and to beautify our island. I am hoping that bringing awareness of this incident will encourage all of us to take a better care for our beaches and help keep it clean.

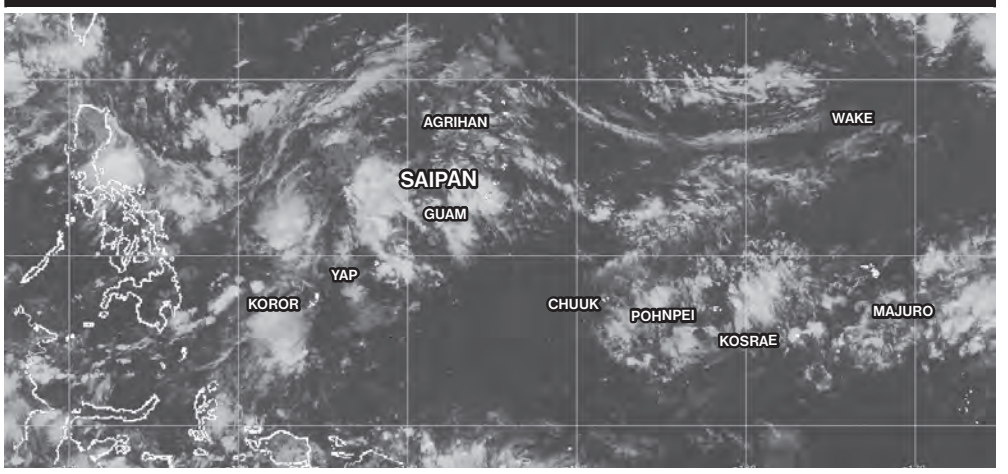
Teddy Guiao
Lower Navy Hill, Saipan

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds around 10 mph.	Partly cloudy. Isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms in the evening, then scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms after midnight.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with showers likely and a chance of thunderstorms.
86º / 76º	84º / 76º	84º / 76º	84º / 76º	84º / 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:35 AM, TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows scattered showers moving through the Marianas Waters this morning. These showers are already affecting Guam, and will soon be reaching the CNMI. The Ipan buoy shows combined seas of 3 to 4 feet, composed mainly of 2 to 3 foot east swell and 2 to 3 foot east-southeast wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	87° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	88° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:04 AM	6:29 PM
Thursday	6:04 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:04 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:04 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:04 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:36 AM	2:00 PM	-
Thursday	1:25 AM	2:53 PM	-
Friday	2:17 AM	3:44 PM	-
Saturday	3:12 AM	4:33 PM	-
Sunday	4:08 AM	5:20 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Rain	61° / 54°
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	84° / 70°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	90° / 82°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87° / 75°
London	Partly Cloudy	72° / 61°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	75° / 62°
Manila	Thunderstorms	91° / 81°
Melbourne	Showers	57° / 45°
Miami	Thunderstorms	88° / 82°
New York	Mostly Sunny	90° / 70°
Osaka	Thunderstorms	91° / 79°
Paris	Mostly Sunny	79° / 64°
Busan	Showers	84° / 77°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	97° / 72°
Salem	Thunderstorms	91° / 75°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	66° / 56°
Seoul	Thunderstorms	82° / 72°
Tokyo	Cloudy	81° / 72°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	89° / 74°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:19 AM	High Tide	1.59
9:16 AM	Low Tide	0.31
5:11 PM	High Tide	1.64
10:08 PM	Low Tide	1.34

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:15am	9:55am	2, 4, 5, 7
UA117	6:30am	7:10am	1, 3, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:30am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	6:30am	9:10pm	3, 6, 7 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	6:55pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:15pm	9:10pm	3, 6, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	4:50am	5:50am	1, 3, 6
UA174	7:30am	8:11am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:50am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:11am+1	3, 6, 7 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	4:00am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:40am+1	3, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

EU takes US off safe travel list; backs travel restrictions

BRUSSELS (AP)—The European Union recommended Monday that its 27 nations reinstate restrictions on tourists from the U.S. because of rising coronavirus infections there, but member countries will keep the option of allowing fully vaccinated U.S. travelers in.

The decision by the European Council to remove the U.S. from a safe list of countries for nonessential travel reverses the advice that it gave in June, when the bloc recommended lifting restrictions on all U.S. travelers before the summer tourism season.

The EU's decision reflects growing anxiety that the rampant spread of the virus in the U.S. could jump to Europe at a time when Americans are allowed to travel to the continent. Both the EU and the U.S. have faced rising infections this summer, driven by the more contagious delta variant.

The guidance issued Monday is nonbinding, however. American tourists should expect a mishmash of travel rules across the continent since the EU has no unified COVID-19 tourism policy and national EU governments have the authority to decide whether or how they keep their borders open during the pandemic.

In this Friday, July 16, 2021 file photo, visitors enjoy the view from top of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. AP

More than 15 million Americans a year visited Europe before the coronavirus crisis, and new travel restrictions could cost European businesses billions in lost travel revenues, especially in tourism-reliant countries like Croatia, which has been surprised by packed beaches and hotels this summer.

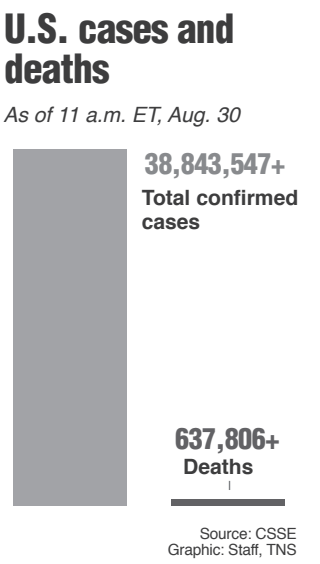
"Nonessential travel to the EU from countries or entities not listed (on the safe list) ... is subject to temporary travel restriction," the council said in a statement. "This is without prejudice to the possibility for member states to lift the temporary restriction on nonessential travel to the EU for fully vaccinated travelers."

U.S. travelers would have to be immunized with one of the vaccines approved by the bloc, which includes Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson&Johnson.

Possible restrictions on U.S. travelers could include quarantines, further testing requirements upon arrival or even a total ban on all nonessential travel from the U.S.

In Washington, White House press secretary Jen Psaki stressed Monday that the EU travel restrictions applied to the unvaccinated, adding that "the fastest path to reopening travel is for people to get vaccinated, to mask up and slow the spread of the deadly virus."

Paski told reporters that the U.S. government is working across federal agencies to develop its own policy for international travel, with the possibility of strengthening testing protocols and potentially ensuring that foreign visitors are fully vaccinated. But she said no final decision has been made yet.



Honolulu to require vaccine or negative test at restaurants

HONOLULU (AP)—Seeking to beat back a COVID-19 surge, Honolulu will soon require patrons of restaurants, bars, museums, theaters and other establishments to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative test for the disease, the city's mayor said Monday.

The move comes after the highly contagious delta variant caused a surge of infections across the state. Before the Fourth of July, Hawaii had a seven-day average of 46 daily cases. On Monday, that figure hit 874.

Mayor Rick Blangiardi said the program called "Safe Access Oahu" takes effect on Sept. 13. Honolulu joins other cities such as New Orleans, New York, San Francisco and the U.S. territory of Guam that have implemented similar requirements.

Children under the age of 12 will be exempt. Employees of the establishments will have to show proof of vaccination or undergo weekly testing, Blangiardi said. He said businesses that don't comply could be fined or potentially shut down.

The mayor said the program was a way to control the spread of COVID-19 while avoiding a lockdown.

"This is a common sense, logical approach. We've been very much in favor of life going on," Blangiardi said.

In Honolulu County, 85% of the eligible population 12 and older has had at least one dose of vaccine. Blangiardi said he hopes the remainder of residents will get vaccinated.

Greg Maples, the chairman of the Hawaii Restaurant Association, said his organization endorsed the new program because it needs the coronavirus to stop spreading.

"Don't stop eating in restaurants. We need you. We need the business," said Maples, who suggested unvaccinated people order takeout instead.

The program will remain in effect for 60 days. If the city doesn't see an improvement, Blangiardi said it will move on to mandatory vaccinations.

As Ida leaves Gulf, analysts foresee modest economic damage

WASHINGTON (AP)—With more than 1 million customers in Louisiana and Mississippi having lost power, Hurricane Ida is sure to take a toll on the energy, chemical and shipping industries that have major hubs along the Gulf Coast. But the impact on the overall U.S. economy will likely be modest so long as damage estimates don't rise sharply and refinery shutdowns are not prolonged, economists say.

The hurricane is expected to inflict a less severe financial impact than Hurricane Katrina did 16 years ago, thanks in part to a lower storm surge and New Orleans' improved levee system. Analysts at Boenning & Scattergood, a financial consultancy, noted that Ida's wind field is smaller than Katrina's, which likely narrows the area of catastrophic damage. The analysts estimated that losses for the insurance industry will hit around $10 billion, far less than the $90 billion-plus from Katrina.

Oil prices barely moved Monday as oil companies and refiners assessed any damage from the storm. The price on the New York Mercantile Exchange was flat at $68.74 per barrel. Gasoline futures rose 1.2%.

Still, Ida, which tied for the fifth-strongest hurricane ever to hit the mainland, left so many customers without electricity that any prolonged power outage could have repercussions, at least temporarily, for the oil, natural gas and chemical companies that have operations along the gulf. The longer power remains out, the longer those companies will struggle to restart their operations.

California moves slowly on water projects amid drought

SITES, Calif. (AP)—In 2014, in the middle of a severe drought that would test California's complex water storage system like never before, voters told the state to borrow $7.5 billion and use part of it to build projects to stockpile more water.

Seven years later, that drought has come and gone, replaced by an even hotter and drier one that is draining the state's reservoirs at an alarming rate. But none of the more than half-dozen water storage projects scheduled to receive that money have been built.

The largest project by far is a proposed lake in Northern California, which would be the state's first new reservoir of significant size in more than 40 years. People have talked about building the Sites Reservoir since the 1950s. But the cost, plus shifting political priorities, stopped it from happening.

Now, a major drought gripping the western United States has put the project back in the spotlight. It's slated to get $836 million in taxpayer money to help cover it's $3.9 billion price tag if project officials can meet a deadline by year's end. The Biden administration recently committed $80 million to the reservoir, the largest appropriation of any water storage scheduled to receive funding next year.

Kevin Spesert, public affairs and real estate manager for the Sites Project Authority, points out the main canal of the Glenn Colusa Irrigation District, on Friday, July 23, 2021, near Sites, Calif. AP

And the project could get some of the $1.15 billion included in an infrastructure bill that has passed the U.S. Senate.

Still, the delay has frustrated some lawmakers, who view it as a wasted opportunity now that the state is preparing to cut of water to thousands of farmers in the Central Valley because of a shortage.

"The longer you don't build, the more expensive it gets," said Republican state Sen. Brian Dahle, whose rural Northern California district includes farmers.

Nation

Flooded streets and homes are shown in the Spring Meadow subdivision in LaPlace, La., after Hurricane Ida moved through Monday, Aug. 30, 2021. AP

Hurricane Ida traps Louisianans, shatters the power grid

NEW ORLEANS (AP)— Rescuers in boats, helicopters and high-water trucks brought hundreds of people trapped by Hurricane Ida's floodwaters to safety Monday and utility repair crews rushed in, after the furious storm swamped the Louisiana coast and ravaged the electrical grid in the stifling, late-summer heat.

Residents living amid the maze of rivers and bayous along the state's Gulf Coast retreated desperately to their attics or roofs and posted their addresses on social media with instructions for search-and-rescue teams on where to find them.

More than 1 million homes and businesses in Louisiana and Mississippi—including all of New Orleans—were left without power as Ida, one of the most powerful hurricanes ever to hit the U.S. mainland, pushed through on Sunday.

The damage was so extensive that officials warned it could be weeks before the power grid was repaired.

As the storm was downgraded to a tropical depression Monday afternoon and continued to make its way inland with torrential rain, it was blamed for at least two deaths—a motorist who drowned in New Orleans and a person hit by a falling tree outside Baton Rouge.

But with many roads impassable and cellphone service out in places, the full extent of its fury was still coming into focus. Christina Stephens, a spokesperson for Gov. John Bel Edwards, said that given the level of destruction, "We're going to have many more confirmed fatalities."

People are evacuated from floodwaters in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida in LaPlace, La., Monday, Aug. 30, 2021. AP

Jacob Hodges, right, and his brother Jeremy Hodges work to clear debris from their storage unit which was destroyed by Hurricane Ida, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, in Houma, La. AP

Destruction is seen in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, in Houma, La. The weather died down shortly before dawn. AP

The governor's office said damage to the power grid appeared "catastrophic"—dispiriting news for those without refrigeration or air conditioning during the dog days of summer, with highs forecast in the mid-80s to near 90 by midweek.

"There are certainly more questions than answers. I can't tell you when the power is going to be restored. I can't tell you when all the debris is going to be cleaned up and repairs made," Edwards told a news conference. "But what I can tell you is we are going to work hard every day to deliver as much assistance as we can."

Local, state and federal rescuers combined to save at least 671 people by Monday afternoon, Edwards said.

In hard-hit LaPlace, squeezed between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, rescuers saved people from flooded homes in a near-constant operation.

Debbie Greco, her husband and son rode out the storm in LaPlace with Greco's parents. Water reached a foot up the first-floor windows, then filled the first floor to 4 feet (1.2 meters) deep once the back door was opened. They retreated to the second floor, but then screaming winds collapsed the roof as waves broke in the front yard.

They were finally rescued by boat after waiting in the only dry spot, five people sharing the landing on the stairs.

"When I rebuild this I'm out of here. I'm done with Louisiana," said Greco's father, 85-year-old Fred Carmouche, a lifelong resident.

Elsewhere in LaPlace, people pulled pieces of chimneys, gutters and other parts of their homes to the curb and residents of a mobile home park waded through floodwaters.

The hurricane blew ashore on the 16th anniversary of Katrina, the 2005 storm that breached New Orleans' levees, devastated the city and was blamed for 1,800 deaths.

This time, New Orleans appeared to escape the catastrophic flooding city officials had feared.

Stephanie Blaise returned to her home with her father in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward after evacuating. The neighborhood suffered devastating flooding in Katrina, but only lost some shingles in Ida. However, with no idea when electricity would be restored, Blaise didn't plan to stay long.

"We don't need to go through that. I'm going to have to convince him to leave. We got to go somewhere. Can't stay in this heat," she said.

The city urged people who evacuated to stay away for at least a couple of days because of the lack of power and fuel. "There's not a lot of reasons to come back," said Collin Arnold, chief of emergency preparedness.

Also, 18 water systems serving about 255,000 customers in Louisiana were knocked out of service, the state Health Department said.

Four Louisiana hospitals were damaged and 39 medical facilities were operating on generator power, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said. Officials said they were evacuating scores of patients to other cities.

The governor's office said over 2,200 evacuees were staying in 41 shelters, a number expected to rise as people were rescued or escaped flooded homes. The governor's spokesperson said the state will work to move people to hotels as soon as possible so they can keep their distance from one another.

Asia

Taliban control now-quiet airport after US departure

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The Taliban were in full control of Kabul's international airport on Tuesday, after the last U.S. plane left its runway, marking the end of America's longest war.

Vehicles carrying the Taliban raced back and forth along the Hamid Karzai International Airport's sole runway on the northern, military side of the airfield. Before dawn broke, heavily armed Taliban fighters walked through hangars, passing some of the seven CH-46 helicopters the State Department used in its evacuations before rendering them unflyable.

Taliban leaders later symbolically walked across the runway, marking their victory while flanked by fighters of the insurgents' elite Badri unit.

"The world should have learned its lesson and this is the enjoyable moment of victory," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a livestream posted by a militant.

Mujahid also addressed the gathered members of the Badri unit. "I hope you be very cautious in dealing with the nation," he said. "Our nation has suffered war and invasion and the people do not have more tolerance."

At the end of his remarks, the Badri fighters shouted: "God is the greatest!"

Later speaking to Al-Jazeera Arabic on the tarmac, Mujahid rejected having a caretaker government and insisted that Kabul remained safe.

"There will be security in Kabul and people should not be concerned," he said.

In another interview with Afghan state television, Mujahid also discussed restarting operations at the airport, which remains a key way out for those wanting to leave the country.

"Our technical team will be checking the technical and logistical needs of the airport," he said. "If we are able to fix everything on our own, then we won't need any help. If there is need for technical or logistics help to repair the destruction, then we might ask help from Qatar or Turkey."

He didn't elaborate on what was destroyed. Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the head of U.S. military's Central Command, earlier said troops "demilitarized" the system so it can never be used again. Officials said troops did not blow up equipment in order to ensure they left the airport workable for future flights, once those begin again. In addition, McKenzie said the U.S. also disabled 27 Humvees and 73 aircraft so they cannot be used again.

'N Korea appears to have resumed nuke reactor operation'

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea appears to have restarted the operation of its main nuclear reactor used to produce weapons fuels, the U.N. atomic agency said, as the North openly threatens to enlarge its nuclear arsenal amid long-dormant nuclear diplomacy with the United States.

The annual report by the International Atomic Energy Agency refers to a 5-megawatt reactor at the North's main nuclear complex in Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang. The reactor produces plutonium, one of the two key ingredients used to build nuclear weapons along with highly enriched uranium.

"Since early July 2021, there have been indications, including the discharge of cooling water, consistent with the operation of the reactor," said the IAEA report dated Friday.

The report said there were indications of the operation of Yongbyon's radiochemical laboratory from mid-February to early July this year. It said this period of operation is consistent with previous reprocessing campaigns announced by North Korea of irradiated fuel discharged from the reactor. The laboratory is a facility where plutonium is extracted by reprocessing spent fuel rods removed from reactors.

"(North Korea's) nuclear activities continue to be a cause for serious concern. Furthermore, the new indications of the operation of the 5-megawatt reactor and the radiochemical laboratory are deeply troubling," the IAEA said.

The IAEA has not had access to Yongbyon or other locations in North Korea since the country kicked out IAEA inspectors in 2009. The agency said it uses satellite imagery and open source information to monitor developments in North Korea's nuclear program.

The Yongbyon complex also produces highly enriched uranium, the other key nuclear fuel. The IAEA report said "there were indications, for a period of time, that the reported centrifuge enrichment facility was not in operation" though regular vehicular movements were observed.

Malaysia's new PM self-isolates, misses Cabinet swearing-in

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysia's new prime minister missed the swearing-in ceremony of his new government on Monday after coming into contact with someone infected with COVID-19, his office said.

Ismail Sabri Yaakob has begun self-isolating and will virtually attend Tuesday's official National Day celebrations, according to a statement from his office. It did not say whom he came in contact with, whether he was tested and how long he would remain in self-isolation.

Ismail took office Aug. 21 amid public anger over the previous government's failure to control a raging pandemic. Daily cases have soared above 20,000 since Aug. 5, with total infections surpassing 1.7 million. Vaccinations are moving rapidly, with 62% of the adult population fully inoculated.

His predecessor, Muhyiddin Yassin, resigned on Aug. 16 after less than 18 months in office as infighting in his coalition cost him majority support in Parliament.

Ismail, 61, was Muhyiddin's deputy, and his appointment to lead the government by Malaysia's king essentially returned the same governing coalition to power. It also returned the premiership to Ismail's party, the United Malays National Organization, which has led the country since independence from Britain in 1957 but was ousted in 2018 elections amid a multibillion-dollar financial scandal.

Ismail has been criticized for largely reappointing ministers from the previous Cabinet which failed to curb the pandemic despite a seven-month state of emergency and a lockdown since June.

A total of 31 ministers and 38 deputy ministers took their oaths of office at the palace Monday. Ismail did not name a deputy but retained four senior ministerial posts which were created by Muhyiddin to keep factions in his Malay-majority government happy.

World

7 minors among 29 dead on a migrant boat to Canary Islands

MADRID (AP)—At least 29 Africans, including seven children, died last week while trying to reach Spain's Canary Islands on a smuggling boat, according to information released Monday from a U.N. migration agency and a Spanish migrant charity in touch with victims' relatives.

Spanish maritime services on Friday rescued 27 migrants and recovered 4 bodies in the boat that was spotted by a fishing vessel 500 kilometers (300 miles) south of El Hierro, an island in the Canary archipelago off northwest Africa.

But at least 24 more people were on the boat when it left Aug. 15 from Dakhla, a port city in the disputed Western Sahara, said Helena Maleno, founder of the Walking Borders non-profit group.

Maleno's organization came up with the figure after conducting extensive interviews with relatives looking for their loved ones. She said only one of the eight children traveling on the boat survived but the girl lost her mother during the trip.

"We are seeing more and more women on these routes, heading to sea with migrants themselves who have little or no experience with navigation and are given the task to be in charge of the boats by the trafficking networks," Maleno told The Associated Press.

Colombian police station blast hurts 13

A police officer inspects damage at a police station after a bomb exploded in Cucuta, Colombia, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, near the Venezuelan border. AP

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—At least 13 people were injured following an explosion at a police station near Colombia's border with Venezuela, officials in the city of Cucuta said on Monday.

Police said the explosion was caused by an "improvised explosive device" that was left at the station, which is located in one of Cucuta's lower income neighborhoods.

So far authorities have refrained from blaming any of the armed groups that operate in the area. In June, a car bomb at a military base in Cucuta injured 44 people, including several U.S. soldiers who were there to train Colombian military personnel. Ten days later, President Ivan Duque's helicopter was shot at as it approached the city's airport.

Cucuta is the capital of North Santander province, which straddles the border with Venezuela and is also one of Colombia's leading cocaine production areas. Several armed groups have been fighting over drug trafficking routes and coca fields in North Santander recently, including the National Liberation Army, a leftist rebel group, as well as a group led by former members of the FARC, the guerrilla group that made peace with Colombia's government in 2016.

Birds of prey facing global decline

WASHINGTON (AP)—Despite a few high-profile conservation success stories – like the dramatic comeback of bald eagle populations in North America – birds of prey are in decline worldwide.

A new analysis of data from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and BirdLife International found that 30% of 557 raptor species worldwide are considered near threatened, vulnerable or endangered or critically endangered. Eighteen species are critically endangered, including the Philippine eagle, the hooded vulture and the Annobon scops owl, the researchers found.

Other species are in danger of becoming locally extinct in specific regions, meaning they may no longer play critical roles as top predators in those ecosystems, said Gerardo Ceballos, a bird scientist at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and co-author of the study published Monday in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"The golden eagle is the national bird of Mexico, but we have very few golden eagles left in Mexico," he said. A 2016 census estimated only about 100 breeding pairs remain in the country.

Harpy eagles were once widespread throughout southern Mexico and Central and South America, but tree cutting and burning has dramatically shrunk their range.

Of threatened birds of prey that are active mostly during the day—including most hawks, eagles and vultures—54% were falling in population, the study found. The same was true for 47% of threatened nocturnal raptors, such as owls.

Good Housekeeping

Accents in black

By CATHY HOBBS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Black accents from a prominent stairwell to side chairs, and toss pillows, creates a sense of elegance.

SCOTT GABRIEL MORRIS/TNS

Looking to make a bold, elegant statement? Why not consider the color black? Black is a color that is more popular than ever, in large part because it is neutral, can easily be paired with other colors, while also making a great accent color.

Accent colors are often considered to be opportunities to add bright, overpowering colors. However, using a neutral color such as black can help to "ground" a space and serve the same purpose. Here are some tips on how accents of black can help elevate and add elegance to nearly any space of the home.

1 Use black as a paint color, from moldings, door casings, banisters and stair treads. The color black can be used to highlight nearly any architectural feature in a home.

2 Repeat or color map accents of black throughout a space. This is a popular designer technique in which an accent color is repeated on different materials or furnishings/accessories throughout a space.

3 Incorporate black accents in artwork. Artwork can be an ideal way to bring accent color into a space.

4 Use portable design elements such as toss pillows, vases and accessories that can easily be moved from room to room or swapped in and out with the seasons.

5 Consider pairing black with white. This powerful neutral combination can serve as the perfect foundation and springboard for a color scheme/palette.

Check fan's mounting bracket

By KALEY BELAKOVICH
ANGIE'S LIST

Balancing a ceiling fan typically poses little challenge for a good handyman. However, not many people realize it's something they can do.

Tony Griffith, owner of Tony G's Handyman Service in Burbank, Calif., says homeowners can do it themselves if they know how.

■ Check the mounting bracket

According to John Marsh, owner of Ceiling Fan & Major Appliance Service Center in San Antonio, you need to check the fan from the ceiling down, starting with the mounting.

If your ceiling fan wobbles, check the screws in the mounting to make sure they're all secure.

If the blades still wobble when you turn it on, you need to move on to balancing the ceiling fan blades.

■ Tools you need to balance ceiling fan blades

One way to balance a ceiling fan includes purchasing a ceiling fan balancing kit, which you can buy at home improvement stores for less than $5. The kit includes a clip and weights.

Or, you can try using items already in your home. Griffith says you can tape quarters, dimes and other coins to the top of fan blades to balance them.

■ Balancing ceiling fans

To start, pick a blade. Attach the test clip or weight to it. Marsh says to place the clip on the center of the blade, on the trailing edge of whatever direction the blades turn.

Turn on the fan and watch to see if the fan becomes more or less wobbly. If less wobbly, you've found the right blade. If not, move to the next blade.

Continue these steps until you've identified the imbalanced blade. Afix the weight to the blade, adjacent to where you placed the clip.

Griffith says if you're using coins to try different denominations—quarters, nickels, dimes or pennies—to see which weight works best.

■ Hire or DIY?

You may be able to balance a ceiling fan yourself, but when in doubt, call in a professional.

Many handymen balance ceiling fans. Expect to pay a service call of about $50 to $75, plus an hourly fee. If the job goes smoothly, it should take only 20 to 45 minutes per fan.

Kaley Belakovich is a reporter at Angie's List, a trusted provider of local consumer reviews and an online marketplace of services from top-rated providers.

And speaking of contractors…

By ALAN J. HEAVENS
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Thousands of articles have been written about how to hire a contractor. I've written several hundred myself, and two books, besides.

Just type "How to hire a contractor" into Google, and voila! much advice appears.

The first non-ad to come up on my list was "This Old House," followed by U.S. News, the Federal Trade Commission, Angie's List ... well, that's enough, because I cannot imagine any would steer me in the wrong direction.

TV carpenter Norm Abram told me on a 1999 visit to The New Yankee Workshop set that he was sent hundreds of tools to try out, and that most performed the same as tools on his workbench.

A hammer is still a hammer, even if it runs on a 9-volt battery.

What you have read so far is my excuse for not sharing contractor-hiring tips from a survey by Invoice2go, which is an invoice app. I will share a few findings about consumers' attitudes toward contractors, however.

Only 6 percent of homeowners indicated that they trusted a bigger company more than a smaller one.

Ninety-three percent indicated they would consider hiring a freelancer.

The number one online place homeowners look for service providers is Angie's List (24 percent), followed by Facebook (21 percent). The other places, in no particular order, were Yelp, Thumbtack, TaskRabbit, HomeAdvisor, and NextDoor.

The top behavior that positively reflects credibility of a home-renovation service provider is "cleaning up after a job," at 85 percent.

As I said, Google it.

Summer, too

Stories about carbon monoxide-related deaths abound in warmer weather, especially after storm-related power outages.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, each year more than 400 Americans die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning; more than 20,000 visit emergency rooms, and more than 4,000 are hospitalized as a result.

If you have a gasoline-powered generator, don't run it in an enclosed area such as a porch or a garage, inside the house, or near windows. And make sure your carbon monoxide detectors are working.

Contact Alan J. Heavens at aheavens@phillynews.com or write him at the Philadelphia Inquirer, Box 8263, Philadelphia PA 19101. Volume prohibits individual replies.

KITCHEN MAGIC

Fontina and Pepper Pizza

When cooked on the grill, homemade pizza becomes a gourmet affair. Add roasted peppers and fresh herbs to the mix, and you've got dinner suitable for company.

- 1 pound fresh pizza dough
- 6 ounces Italian Fontina or Provolone cheese, shredded
- 2 jarred roasted red and/or yellow peppers, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh marjoram or thyme leaves

1 Prepare outdoor grill for covered, direct grilling on medium-low.

2 Cut dough into 4 equal pieces. On one end of oiled cookie sheet, with fingertips, spread and flatten 1 piece of dough to about 1/8-inch thickness. (Edge does not need to be even.) On same cookie sheet, repeat with another piece of dough. Repeat with a second oiled cookie sheet and remaining dough.

3 Place all 4 pieces of dough, oiled side down, on hot grill grate. Cook 2 to 3 minutes or until grill marks appear on underside (dough will stiffen and puff).

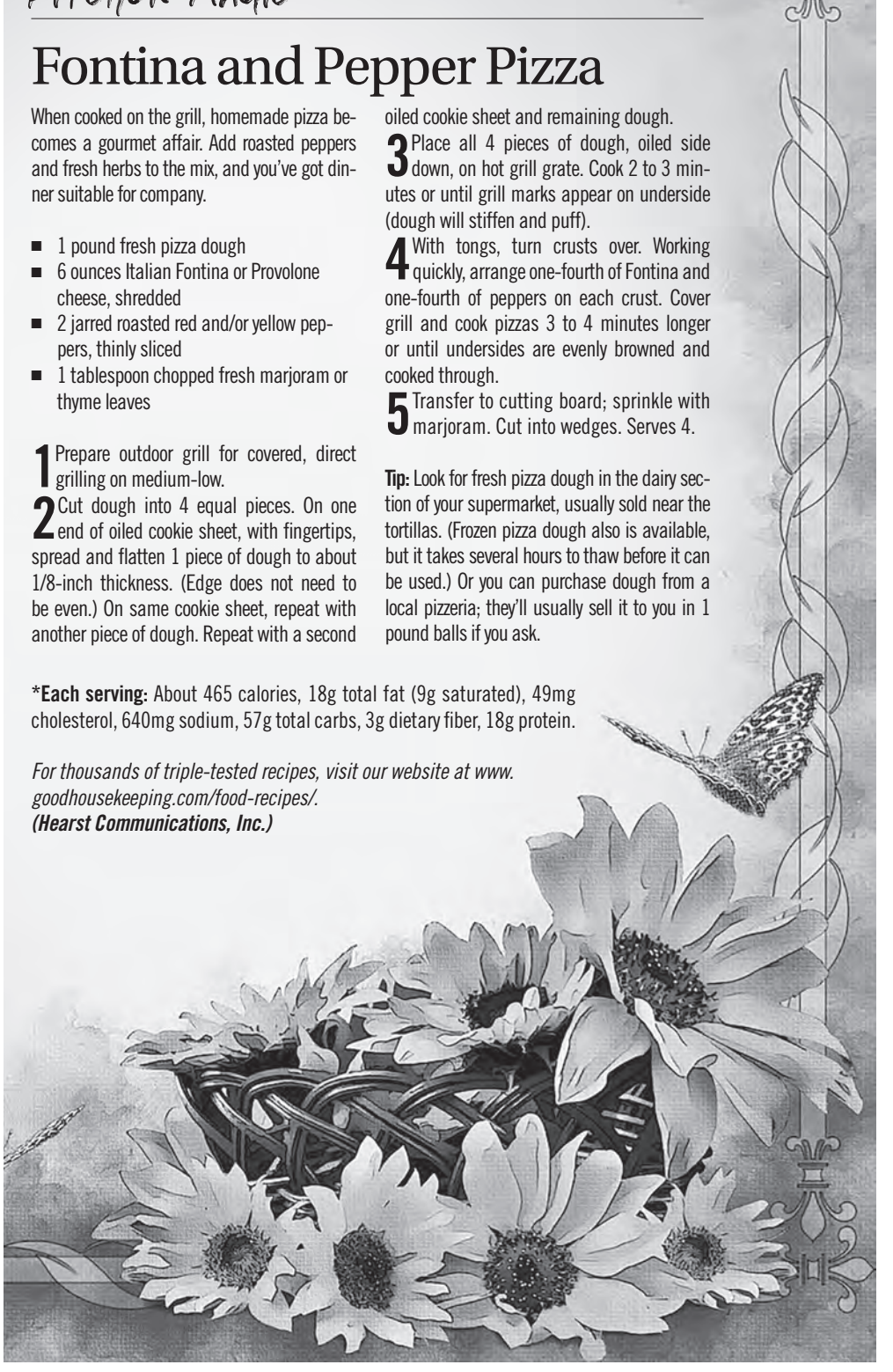
4 With tongs, turn crusts over. Working quickly, arrange one-fourth of Fontina and one-fourth of peppers on each crust. Cover grill and cook pizzas 3 to 4 minutes longer or until undersides are evenly browned and cooked through.

5 Transfer to cutting board; sprinkle with marjoram. Cut into wedges. Serves 4.

Tip: Look for fresh pizza dough in the dairy section of your supermarket, usually sold near the tortillas. (Frozen pizza dough also is available, but it takes several hours to thaw before it can be used.) Or you can purchase dough from a local pizzeria; they'll usually sell it to you in 1 pound balls if you ask.

***Each serving:** About 465 calories, 18g total fat (9g saturated), 49mg cholesterol, 640mg sodium, 57g total carbs, 3g dietary fiber, 18g protein.

For thousands of triple-tested recipes, visit our website at www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/.
(Hearst Communications, Inc.)



Life & Style

Man testifies against R. Kelly in sex-trafficking trial

NEW YORK (AP)—After several days of testimony from women claiming they were groomed and sexually abused by R. Kelly, a man took the witness stand at Kelly's sex-trafficking trial in New York City on Monday to say the R&B star exploited him in the same way when he was a high school student.

The witness, testifying in federal court in Brooklyn without using his real name, told a jury how Kelly lured him to his Chicago-area home in 2007 with false offers of helping him with his fledgling music career.

Kelly asked the alleged victim, then 17, "what I was willing to do for music," the witness said. He replied, "I'll carry your bags. ... Anything you need, I'll be willing to do."

"That's not it. That's not it," he said Kelly responded before asking him if he ever fantasized about having sex with men. He described how Kelly then "crawled down on his knees and proceeded to give me oral sex," even though, "I wasn't into it."

Afterward, "he told me to keep between him and me," he said.

In a later episode, Kelly snapped his fingers to summon a naked girl from where she was hiding under a boxing ring to give Kelly and the witness oral sex, the man told the jury.

He kept seeing Kelly after that because "I really wanted to make it in the music industry," he said.

The witness was testifying as part of a cooperation agreement stemming from his guilty plea in a separate case alleging he was part of a botched scheme to bribe a woman to not testify against Kelly. No charges were brought against Kelly related to the scheme.

Kelly, 54, has repeatedly denied accusations that he preyed on victims during a 30-year career highlighted by his 1996 mega hit "I Believe I Can Fly." His lawyers have portrayed his accusers as groupies who are lying about their relationships with him.

Earlier Monday, a woman testified that Kelly sexually assaulted her at age 17 following a performance in Miami in 1994. The witness, also testifying without using her real name, claimed that Kelly's cronies took her and a friend to his dressing room after the show before he pulled down her shorts and forced her to have unprotected sex, she said.

"I was in complete shock," she said. "I didn't know what to say at all. I basically went blank."

China limits children to 3 hours of online gaming a week

BEIJING (AP)—China is banning children from playing online games for more than three hours a week, the harshest restriction so far on the game industry as Chinese regulators continue cracking down on the technology sector.

Minors in China can only play games between 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Fridays, weekends and on public holidays starting Sept. 1, according to a notice from the National Press and Publication Administration.

That limits gaming to three hours a week for most weeks of the year, down from a previous restriction set in 2019 that allowed minors play games for an hour and a half per day and three hours on public holidays.

The new regulation affects some of China's largest technology companies, including gaming giant Tencent, whose Honor of Kings online multiplayer game is hugely popular globally, as well as gaming company NetEase.

Tencent's stock price closed down 0.6% at 465.80 Hong Kong dollars on Monday ahead of the regulator's announcement. Its market capitalization of $573 billion is down more than $300 billion from its February peak, a decline equal to more than the total value of Nike Inc. or Pfizer Inc.

New York-listed NetEase's stock was down about 9% at the market's open.

The gaming restrictions are part of an ongoing crackdown on technology companies, amid concerns that technology firms—many of which provide ubiquitous messaging, payments and gaming services—may have an outsized influence on society.

Earlier this month, Tencent said it would limit gaming time for minors to an hour a day and two hours during holidays, as well as ban children under the age of 12 from making in-game purchases.

The company issued the curbs hours after a state-affiliated newspaper criticized the gaming industry and called games "spiritual opium."

Regulators said in Monday's notice that they would strengthen supervision and increase the frequency of inspections of online game companies to ensure that they follow the regulations closely.

Chinese authorities in recent months have targeted e-commerce and online education, and have implemented new regulations to curb anti-competitive behavior after years of rapid growth in the technology sector.

Last month, authorities banned companies that provide tutoring in core school subjects from making a profit, wiping out billions in market value from online education companies such as TAL Education and Gaotu Techedu.

Universal Studios sets opening for first theme park in China

BEIJING (AP)—Universal Studios announced Monday that its first theme park in China will open in the country's capital in September.

The company set the opening date for Sept. 20, according to a statement and video posted on the Chinese social media site WeChat.

Under construction since 2016, the theme park has received strong backing from Beijing authorities, including the extension of one of the city's main subway lines to the site.

Along with rides, shows, restaurants and exhibits, the resort features a pair of hotels. The project will complement Universal's other two Asian parks in Japan and Singapore.

The Harry Potter, Jurassic Park and Kung Fu Panda film franchises feature heavily, along with the Minions from the "Despicable Me" movies.

Beijing's historic sites have long drawn tourists. The coronavirus pandemic curtailed a rapidly growing demand for domestic travel and tourism, but new cases of local transmission have been falling, feeding optimism in the tourism sector.

In this Wednesday, May 26, 2021 file photo, men wearing masks stand inside the Universal Studios theme park, part of the Universal Beijing Resort, under construction in Beijing, China. AP

Star-crossed lovers remain worlds apart on earth

DEAR ABBY: My soul mate, "Ted," is marrying another woman. When we met 10 years ago, we fell madly in love. We had absolutely everything in common but couldn't take our relationship to the next level because we were both married at the time.

Ted's wife eventually left him for another man, but we still couldn't be together as I was still married. During that time, he met a woman named "Shelley." I eventually got divorced because my husband left me for another woman, but I still couldn't be with Ted because he was now with Shelley.

We are perfect for each other in every way, but our paths could never come together. Ted has admitted they have nothing in common and he's not in love with her, but he feels he has an obligation since she has been there for so long. I'm devastated at the thought of losing my soul mate again. I don't want him to marry her. Help!

SUCH BAD TIMING IN TENNESSEE

DEAR TIMING: I am going to assume that Ted knows you are devastated at the thought of his marrying someone else. If you haven't told him, do it now. And when you do, point out that marriages entered into out of a feeling of "obligation" rather than love don't usually last. It's a sad truth. If he was being honest with you about his feelings for Shelley, she deserves better than what she'll be getting. Keep in mind that Ted has had time to end that romance since your divorce. My advice is to take a break. Clear your head before trying to find someone who is as available as you are, since Ted is taken.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My dad used to beat my mother badly. Back then, it was "don't tell." Well, I guess she got tired of it because she had him shot. I was 15 at the time. My brother and sister were 8 and 6, and they don't remember it well. But they were in my care until they were in their 20s.

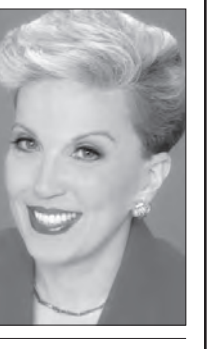
Now they are older, and I am treated like the black sheep. They act like I'm beneath them, and it hurts. My brother ended up in prison and was out for only two months before he put his hands on me. Am I petty for having nothing to do with them? My mom was in prison for a long time and died two years after she was released. What am I supposed to do? Any advice would be appreciated.

DRIFTING IN THE EAST

DEAR DRIFTING: Abusers have sometimes been victims themselves, or they grew up witnessing abuse, which is why they think it is normal behavior. Please accept that you can't fix what's wrong with your relatives (the younger ones included). Although you have been through much trauma at an early age, it is within your power to heal. Counseling can help you to do that. It is available in most communities through the Department of Mental Health.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I find the phrase, "Shut up!" to be hostile, aggressive and, at times, demoralizing. Are there any situations where it is OK to say it?

POLITE IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR POLITE: Although the phrase "Shut up!" may be jarring to hear, it has become part of the vernacular and its meaning has changed over the years. It isn't always intended to mean "be quiet." It is sometimes used lightheartedly to express surprise.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

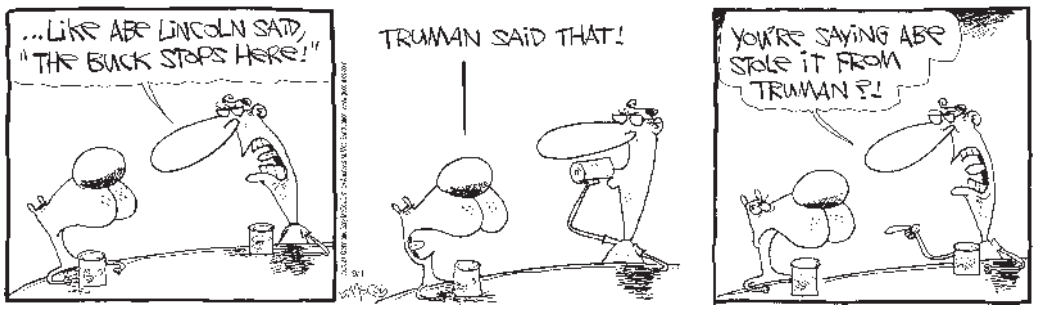
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

SERIOUSLY. I NEED IDEAS FOR MY KIDS BOOK.
SON... IDEAS ARE ELUSIVE, SLIPPERY THINGS.
LIKE TRYING TO EAT AN OILED FOOTLONG SALAMI WITH SUNTAN LOTION ON YOUR HANDS.
THAT'S... ODDLY SPECIFIC.
YEAH. IT WAS AN AWKWARD DAY AT THE PUBLIC BEACH.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Scruff
5 Prof's degree
8 Many corp. recruits
12 One-named supermodel
13 Carnival city
14 Suffix for million
15 Closest pals
17 Furniture brand
18 Slept loudly
19 Most competent
21 "— -haw!" (cowboy cry)
22 Crystal gazer
23 Indent key
26 SSW opposite
28 Viny shelter
31 "Shoo!"
33 Three, in Rome
35 Mumbai dress
36 San Diego player
38 SASE, e.g.
40 Steal from
41 Cave creatures
43 Needle-fish
45 Sell
47 Sports venues
51 Busy as —
52 Lots of money
54 Bell sound
55 Chemical suffix
56 Twosome
57 Sacred chests
58 Leary's drug
59 Without

DOWN

1 Pen tips
2 "So be it"
3 El —, Texas
4 Doorway
5 Wise
6 Secreted
7 South Indian crepes
8 Padded envelopes
9 Hangout for hog fans?
10 War god
11 Pants part
16 Existed
20 Arthur of "Maude"
23 Recipe abbr.
24 Obama-care acronym
25 Misfortune
27 Before
29 Spanish gold
30 Tease
32 Sees the world
34 Betrothed
37 Montreal summer
39 Low- — diet
42 Sally Field role
44 Enlists again
45 Dad
46 Taxi alterna-tive
48 March Madness gp.
49 Related
50 Former polit. divisions
53 Dog tags, e.g.

Solution time: 23 mins.

L	E	T	O	■	B	A	N	■	G	M	E	N
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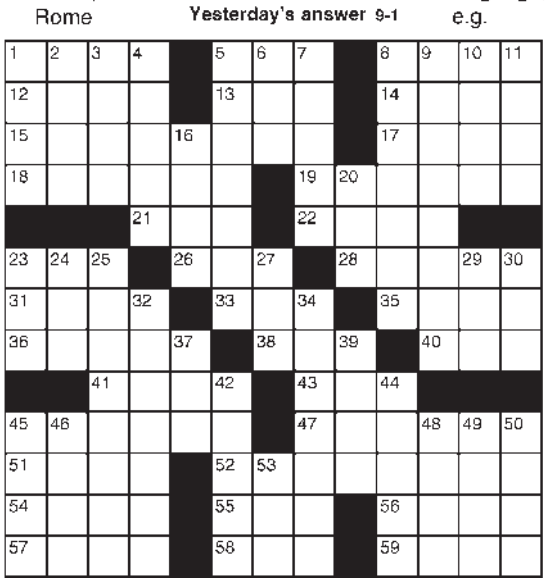
Yesterday's answer 9-1



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Zendaya, 25; Zoe Lister-Jones, 39; Gloria Estefan, 64; Lily Tomlin, 82.

Happy Birthday: Express the way you feel, and get your priorities in order. Refuse to let emotional matters stifle your progress. It's up to you to make things happen and navigate your way to the place you want to reach. Set goals, prepare and educate yourself to ensure you can fulfill your dreams. Change begins with you, so get moving. Your numbers are 5, 12, 21, 27, 32, 36, 40.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* You'll accomplish the most if you work from home. The less you deal with outside influences, the better. An emotional problem will surface if you cannot agree with someone in a position of authority. Pay attention to the rules and regulations. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Get in touch with someone you haven't talked to in a while. The information you receive will help you formulate what you want to do regarding your current position or lifestyle. Take the initiative to bring about positive change. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Concentrate on what you want, then head in that direction. The work you do will propagate opportunities to use your creative input. Don't be afraid to take a unique path. Take charge of your happiness and follow your heart. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take a pass if someone tries to engage in a spirited discussion. It's better to be reserved and avoid topics that take you out of your comfort zone. Pay more attention to fixing up your space and getting your finances in order. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Hide your feelings until you feel safe sharing. Offering too much information will leave you in a vulnerable position. Be a good listener, and you will make better decisions. Nurture a meaningful relationship with love and affection. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* A position that interests you will not live up to your expectations. Do your homework before you make a decision that can alter your earning potential. If you want something, take responsibility and do it yourself. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't waffle; pay your dues, and go about your business. Now is the time to explore and expand your mind, not miss out on opportunities because you can't decide. Embrace life, live in the moment and discover what makes you feel passionate. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Balance your books, then figure out what you can afford to do that's on your bucket list. You'll enjoy the process much more if you aren't stressed over the cost involved. Choose an innovative approach to life, love and happiness. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Get approval before you do something that will affect others. A domestic problem will surface if you aren't upfront regarding your plans. A professional change needs to be handled with caution. Get what you want in writing. Choose your words wisely. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Emotional issues will stand in your way where shared expenses or joint ventures are concerned. Don't get worked up without good cause. Hear what others have to say and counter with something that will benefit everyone, not just you. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Clarify your intentions before you start something new, and it will be easier to get to the finish line without interference. A physical encounter will lift your spirits and motivate you to turn one of your skills into a lucrative endeavor. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Make an adjustment that is conducive to getting ahead professionally. Monitor what's going on in your field, and you will get a jump-start on something that can raise your earning potential. Update skills and technology, and embark on a virtual networking extravaganza. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, thoughtful and disciplined. You are cautious and protective.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

						6
			4	6		8 5
		3			2	1
	5	9	8		1	
7				5	9	
	4	1	2		6	3
	3		6		4	2
		4			1	5 9
					8 6	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 9/01

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	8	6	3	5	7	1	2	9
1	7	2	9	4	6	5	3	8
3	9	5	2	8	1	4	6	7
7	5	4	8	6	3	9	1	2
6	3	9	1	2	5	8	7	4
8	2	1	4	7	9	6	5	3
5	6	3	7	9	8	2	4	1
2	1	8	6	3	4	7	9	5
9	4	7	5	1	2	3	8	6

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

INCANTATIONS **Solution: 9 letters**

S	E	H	U	M	B	L	Y	I	N	V	I	T	E	S
N	U	N	T	N	E	M	O	F	G	P	R	S	S	L
E	O	M	K	P	G	S	S	N	L	S	P	E	L	L
T	S	I	M	I	S	K	I	E	I	P	N	U	A	G
A	N	I	T	O	N	G	A	P	G	T	P	Q	U	L
C	O	M	M	A	N	D	S	B	I	D	D	I	N	G
I	I	E	H	I	G	I	L	W	V	H	D	R	A	W
L	T	T	R	N	E	O	N	E	I	A	S	K	S	E
P	N	B	N	O	P	T	R	G	N	P	E	R	D	R
P	E	G	N	I	L	L	A	C	O	F	R	A	O	H
U	M	I	Q	T	A	P	E	V	S	O	U	E	Y	W
S	T	U	U	A	H	R	M	A	I	S	J	M	Ⓢ	E
P	E	C	I	T	N	E	F	I	R	T	N	I	Ⓔ	S
U	P	R	A	I	S	E	L	E	O	E	O	T	Ⓔ	O
R	F	E	T	C	H	L	P	P	R	R	C	M	Ⓚ	P

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Asks, Begs, Bidding, Bringing, Calling, Citation, Commands, Conjures, Draw, Enkindle, Entice, Fetch, Foment, Foster, Guidance, Help, Humbly, Hymn, Impel, Implore, Invites, Mentions, Motivate, Orison, Persuade, Pique, Plead, Pose, Praise, Press, Pull, Quest, Real, Refrain, Rogation, Seek, Spell, Spur, Summoning, Supplicate, Thanks, Time, Vigil, Witness, Worship

Yesterday's Answer: Famous

Treasuries 23 through 43 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

After US Open loss, Murray calls Tsitsipas breaks 'nonsense'

NEW YORK (AP)—Andy Murray is aware that Stefanos Tsitsipas has a growing reputation for pushing the boundaries when it comes to taking breaks during a match. Murray expected that to be an issue during their first-round match at the U.S. Open—and, when it was, that didn't sit well. Not at all.

Andy Murray, of Great Britain, reacts after scoring a point against Stefanos Tsitsipas, of Greece, during the first round of the US Open tennis championships, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, in New York. AP

Murray figures there was enough for him to deal with in Monday's high heat and humidity: He's 34. He's got an artificial hip. He's ranked 112th after a series of health issues. At one point, he tumbled to the ground, losing his balance in sweat-soaked shoes and leaving splotches on the blue court from his soggy clothing.

So as the contest stretched to almost five hours, Murray did not appreciate that Tsitsipas took a medical timeout after the third set and made a lengthy visit to the locker room after the fourth. Following an entertaining, back-and-forth 2-6, 7-6 (7), 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 loss to Tsitsipas, Murray complained about what he considered unfair gamesmanship by the French Open runner-up and announced: "I lost respect for him."

"It's nonsense. And he knows it, as well," said Murray, who is nearly a decade—and a pair of hip operations—removed from a U.S. Open championship.

Told of Murray's displeasure, the just-turned-23 Tsitsipas said: "If there's something that he has to tell me, we should speak, the two of us, to kind of understand what went wrong. I don't think I broke any rules."

The whole thing lent some intrigue to the proceedings as the year's last Grand Slam tournament got underway with fans in the stands at full capacity—the combined attendance for the day and night sessions was 53,783—a year after all spectators were banned because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"When we didn't have a crowd," reigning champion Naomi Osaka said after beating Marie Bouzkova 6-4, 6-1 at night, "I know it felt quite lonely for me."

That was Osaka's first Grand Slam match since she pulled out of the French Open in late May for a mental health break. She played rather well, compiling a 34-10 edge in total winners and saving all eight break points Bouzkova earned.

With exits for Murray and 2014 champion Marin Cilic, who stopped playing because of an injury in the fifth set against Philipp Kohlschreiber, the only man left in the draw with even one Grand Slam title is No. 1 Novak Djokovic.

He will debut Tuesday night as he tries to break a tie for the men's mark of 20 majors with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal and become the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to complete a calendar-year Grand Slam.

The last match on the Day One schedule didn't get going until after 11 p.m. and ended after 1 a.m. Tuesday, with No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, a two-time major finalist, overwhelming Richard Gasquet 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.

Far earlier, there were victories Monday for 2017 champion Sloane Stephens, who edged Madison Keys 6-3, 1-6, 7-6 (7) in a rematch of their final four years ago; multiple Grand Slam title winners and former No. 1s Angelique Kerber, Simona Halep and Garbiñe Muguruza; 2020 runner-up Victoria Azarenka and 17-year-old American Coco Gauff.

"I just remember, like, last year, not necessarily being bored, but it was just so quiet for the U.S. Open," the 21st-seeded Gauff said after advancing to face Stephens with a 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 comeback against Magda Linette. "I definitely missed the buzz."

Some spectators griped about delays getting in, which the U.S. Tennis Association said were largely caused by the time it took to inspect bags at the entry gates.

The USTA added that checking for proof of vaccination required to attend the event this year went smoothly and did not contribute in a significant way to long lines.

Those lucky enough to be in Ashe rose and roared in unison when Murray smacked a forehand winner to claim the third set. He raised his right hand overhead and leaned forward as he shouted, "I'm not ... done! Let's go!"

But it was Tsitsipas who wasn't finished. He got treatment from a trainer on his left foot after that set, then headed off court again a set later for several minutes.

After he got broken right away and fell behind 2-0 in the fifth, Murray offered this observation on court: "It's never taken me that long to go to the toilet. Ever."

Murray explained later he thought the interruptions played a role.

"It's just disappointing, because I feel it influenced the outcome of the match. I'm not saying I necessarily win that match, for sure, but it had influence on what was happening after those breaks," he said. "You could argue that I shouldn't let that affect me. But genuinely it is difficult, like, when you're playing such a brutal match in those conditions to have those breaks. Physically you can't stop that from affecting you. Mentally, yes, but physically you can't."

The humidity at 70% and the temperature in the low-80s Fahrenheit (high 20s Celsius) required a bit more than Murray could give. He is a former No. 1 who won Wimbledon twice in addition to his 2012 title in New York, but his body has not held up.

Given his age and health history, it was remarkable that Murray was out there at all, let alone coming close to becoming, at No. 112 this week, the lowest-ranked man to upset an opponent in the top three at the U.S. Open since the computerized ATP rankings began in 1973.

After a third-round exit at Wimbledon early last month, Murray sounded rather glum about his future, frustrated that that he couldn't practice as much as he'd like to be properly competitive. On Saturday, Murray opined that taking on Tsitsipas would be "a good, good test for me to see kind of where my game's at."

He seemed to pass that test. He much rather would have won.

Osaka wins US Open return, hopes to 'believe more in myself'

NEW YORK (AP)—Here's the realization Naomi Osaka came to, gradually and only recently: If other people think a lot of her, she probably should, too.

"Hearing a little kid telling me that I'm their favorite player or I'm a role model, instinctively the first thought in my mind is, like, 'Why?'" Osaka explained as Monday turned to Tuesday after a successful start to her U.S. Open title defense. "I feel like I have to sort of embrace more ... the honor that they're telling me that, and I should believe more in myself. I feel like if you don't believe in yourself, then other people won't believe in yourself."

During her return to Grand Slam action after a mental health break—an at-times-dominant 6-4, 6-1 victory over 87th-ranked Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic—Osaka heard the high-pitched voice of one such "little kid" in Arthur Ashe Stadium.

When the match ended, Osaka went over with a little gift: one of the Olympic pins athletes collect.

With a bit of self-deprecation, Osaka noted that she didn't stick around at the Tokyo Games long enough to trade away all of those mini-souvenirs (a native of host country Japan, she was granted the honor of lighting the cauldron at the opening ceremony, then lost her third-round match).

The Summer Olympics marked her first competition anywhere since May 30 at the French Open.

That day, Osaka skipped her mandatory news conference after her first-round victory in Paris, drawing a $15,000 fine and a warning from the heads of the Slams that she could face a suspension. She responded by pulling out of Roland Garros, explaining that she feels anxiety when speaking to the media and has dealt with depression for years. Osaka then sat out Wimbledon, too.

The 23-year-old is clearly introspective and thoughtful, someone who is getting more and more used to sharing her innermost ideas with the rest of the world. In a social media post Sunday about ruminations on self-worth, Osaka wrote that she's "gonna try to celebrate myself and my accomplishments more, I think we all should" and that she "can't burden myself with (others') expectations anymore."

On Monday, she entered Ashe with her usual first-round Slam jitters, but not because of any sense of pressure to win, Osaka said afterward.

Instead, it was based on a desire to play well, especially for the loud and appreciative full house that was there a year after she won the title in a nearly empty arena because spectators were banned then amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"I tell people that I'm a perfectionist. I think for me, something that's less than perfection, even though it might be something great, is a disappointment. I don't really think that's a healthy way of thinking, so something that I really wanted to change," said the third-seeded Osaka, who next faces 145th-ranked Olga Danilovic.

"In this tournament I just want to be happy with knowing that I did my best and knowing that even though I didn't play perfect, I was able to win a match in two sets. ... It's more like a life thing," she continued. "Like, I hope I can keep this mindset throughout my life going forward."

Maybe she wasn't perfect against Bouzkova, who is now 1-11 in Slam matches. After all, the score was 4-all in the early going. From there, though, Osaka reeled off eight of the last nine games.

Helped by a serve that reached 120 mph, she saved all eight break points she faced and accumulated a 34-10 edge in total winners.

"Last year, when we didn't have a crowd, I know it felt quite lonely for me," she said with a smile during her on-court interview. "I'm glad to see little kids in the audience—and, of course, grown-ups, too."

Osaka improved to 55-14 in matches at the majors, including 22-3 at the U.S. Open as she tries to become the first woman with consecutive trophies in New York since Serena Williams collected her third in a row in 2014.

Osaka beat Williams in the chaotic 2018 final in Ashe. She also has won hard-court major titles at the Australian Open in 2019 and this February.

"I've played a lot of matches on this court," Osaka told the Ashe fans. "Definitely, I feel really comfortable here."

Astros rally late against former teammate, top Mariners, 4-3

SEATTLE (AP)—Jake Meyers had the last of three singles as part of Houston's eighth-inning rally against former teammate Joe Smith, scoring Kyle Tucker with the go-ahead run and sending the Astros over the Seattle Mariners 4-3 on Monday night.

Dylan Moore had a pinch-hit, two-run homer for Seattle in the sixth for a 3-2 lead. But that was erased in the eighth as Smith (2-3) couldn't get outs against his former team and Seattle made a pair of defensive miscues.

Yuli Gurriel led off with a single and advanced to second when J.P. Crawford failed to make a clean catch on the throw from the outfield.

Tucker followed with a hitt to score Gurriel and in four pitches Seattle's lead was gone. Tucker stole second with one out and Meyers capped the comeback with a single to left field off Smith. Moore double-clutched and failed make a throw to home plate even after Tucker stumbled momentarily between second and third.

Houston reliever Ryne Stanek struck out the side in the eighth and Ryan Pressly worked around a leadoff walk in the ninth for his 22nd save.

Houston has won five of six and its rally was another blow to Seattle's waffling playoff hopes. The Mariners have lost four of five on their current homestand, dropped 8½ back of the Astros in the AL West and failed to make up a game on Boston in the wild card.

Moore provided Seattle a needed jolt when he homered off Houston reliever Brooks Raley for the second time this season. It was Moore's first homer since July 26 when he hit an eighth-inning grand slam off Raley to cap Seattle's rally for an 11-8 victory.

Jose Marmolejos also homered for Seattle after being selected from Triple-A Tacoma earlier in the day.

Houston scored twice in the first against Chris Flexen but failed to add on despite plenty of base runners. Yordan Alvarez's RBI single and Tucker's sacrifice fly gave Houston the early lead.

Houston Astros' Kyle Tucker (30) slides home to score on an RBI-single hit by Jake Meyers during the eighth inning of a baseball game, Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, in Seattle. AP

Rays 6, Red Sox 1

In St. Petersburgh, Fla., Wander Franco extended his on-base streak to 30 games with a two-run single, fellow rookie Luis Patiño pitched neatly into the sixth inning and the AL East-leading Tampa Bay Rays won their eighth in a row, beating the Boston Red Sox 6-1 Monday night.

Brandon Lowe hit his career-high 31st homer on the first pitch from Boston starter Nick Pivetta, sending the Rays on their way.

Boston, which led the Rays by 1 1/2 games entering a three-game series at Tampa Bay on July 30, dropped nine game back in the division race.

Bobby Dalbec hit his 18th homer for the Red Sox, who hold a two-game lead over Oakland for the second AL wild-card spot.

The 21-year-old Patiño (4-3) gave up one run and five hits in 5 2/3 innings. T

The Rays went up 3-1 in the fourth. Kevin Kiermaier hit a two-out double, went to third when Mike Zunino reached on a wild pitch while striking out and scored on Lowe's high hopper over Dalbec for a single.

Pivetta (9-7) allowed six hits, five walks and four earned runs with six strikeouts in five innings.

Angels 8, Yankees 7

In Anaheim, Calif., Shohei Ohtani hit his major-league leading 42nd home run, Jack Mayfield connected for his first career grand slam and Los Angeles dealt New York its third straight loss.

The difference in the game ended up being a two-out single by Juan Lagares off Clay Holmes in the eighth inning that drove in Brandon Marsh with the go-ahead run.

Lagares had three hits and drove in two runs. Marsh led off the eighth with a single against Wandy Peralta (4-3).

Junior Guerra (5-2), who allowed a prodigious two-run shot to Giancarlo Stanton in the seventh inning that made it 7-all, got the win. Raisel Iglesias earned his 28th save.

Blue Jays 7, Orioles 3

In Toronto, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit two homers and raised his season total to 38, Robbie Ray pitched seven innings for his first win in six starts, and Toronto won its third straight with a victory over Baltimore.

Guerrero hit a solo home run off right-hander Chris Ellis in the fourth inning and a three-run blast off righty Marcos Diplán in the seventh.

Bo Bichette hit a game-tying single off Dillon Tate (0-4) in the sixth, and Teoscar Hernández followed with a two-run double.

Ray (10-5) allowed two runs and four hits and struck out 10.

Toronto's George Springer went 1 for 2 with a walk, scored twice, was hit by a pitch and stole a base in a busy return to the lineup after missing 13 games because of a sprained left knee.

Ryan Mountcastle homered and had two RBIs for the Orioles. The loss dropped Baltimore to 3-24 in August.

Brewers 3, Giants 1

In San Francisco, Corbin Burnes struck out nine while tossing scoreless ball into the seventh and singled home a run to help his winning cause, pitching Milwaukee past San Francisco.

Burnes (9-4) didn't walk a batter and allowed four hits. Brandon Belt led off the seventh with a double and Kris Bryant singled to end Burnes' night.

Brad Boxberger relieved and immediately surrendered Brandon Crawford's RBI single. But that was it for the NL leaders.

Josh Hader claimed his 28th save.

Omar Narváez hit an RBI single in the first, following Christian Yelich's one-out double for Central-leading Milwaukee (80-52). Luis Urías contributed a key sacrifice fly in the eighth.

Lefty reliever José Álvarez (4-2) rmade his eighth career start on short notice and was done after 1 2/3 innings as San Francisco made it a bullpen game.

Dodgers 5, Braves 3

In Los Angeles, Julio Urías earned his major league-leading 15th victory and Los Angeles slugged four homers to beat Atlanta, ending the Braves' franchise-record 13-game road winning streak.

Mookie Betts homered, and Will Smith and Corey Seager also went deep to help the Dodgers close within 1 1/2 games of first-place San Francisco in the NL West.

Freddie Freeman, Jorge Soler and Adam Duvall homered for NL East-leading Atlanta.

Urías (15-3) allowed two runs and four hits in six innings. The left-hander struck out seven without a walk. Blake Treinen picked up his fifth save.

Drew Smyly (9-4) took the loss. He gave up five runs and nine hits, struck out five and walked none.

Padres 7, Diamondbacks 5

In Phoenix, Chris Paddack gave up one run over 4 2/3 innings in his return from the injured list, Fernando Tatis Jr. added a homer, double and three RBIs, and San Diego held on to beat Arizona.

Paddack allowed just three hits in his first outing since July 27. Craig Stammen (6-3) pitched a scoreless inning of relief and earned the win.

San Diego won for only the fourth time in 17 games, pulling a half-game behind the Cincinnati Reds for the final NL playoff spot.

Ketel Marte hit a two-out grand slam off Emilio Pagán to pull Arizona within 6-5.

Tyler Gilbert (1-2) gave up five runs, including three earned, over five innings. He gave up eight hits, walked one and struck out four. Arizona has lost four straight.

Phillies 7, Nationals 4

In Washington, Bryce Harper homered in the first inning and Philadelphia won its fourth straight with a victory over Washington.

Brad Miller also went deep and Ronald Torreyes added a bases-loaded triple for Philadelphia, which improved to 7-1 at Nationals Park this season.

Carter Kieboom homered for Washington, which has dropped three in a row, five of its last six and 19 of 25.

Josiah Gray (0-2) allowed six runs in four innings, the shortest of his six starts since joining Washington at the trade deadline from the Dodgers.

Zack Wheeler (11-9) pitched six innings for Philadelphia, yielding four runs while striking out four.

Cardinals 3, Reds 1

In Cincinatti, Jon Lester allowed one hit while pitching into the seventh inning, Paul Goldschmidt homered and St. Louis inched closer to slumping Cincinnati in the NL wild-card race.

The Cardinals closed within 2 1/2 games of Cincinnati for the second wild-card spot. San Diego is between them.

The Reds have scored one run in each of their last three games, all losses.

Lester (5-6) retired 16 consecutive batters after giving up his only hit, Kyle Farmer's second-inning leadoff home run. He walked two and struck out five in 6 1/3 innings, earning his fourth straight win. Giovanny Gallegos pitched the ninth for his third save.

The Cardinals needed just two batters to grab a 2-0 lead. Luis Castillo (7-14) walked Tommy Edman to lead off the game. Goldschmidt followed with an opposite-field homer to right, his 22nd of the season.

Twins 3, Tigers 2

In Detroit, Bailey Ober pitched six solid innings and Josh Donaldson's two-run homer helped Minnesota beat Detroit.

The Twins have won three of four. Detroit has lost four of five, scoring only nine runs.

Ober (2-2) held the slumping Tigers' offense to two runs on five hits in six innings. He struck out five without walking a batter. Alex Colome earned his 10th save.

Tigers starter Casey Mize (7-7) gave up three runs on five hits—including Donaldson's homer, his 21st of the season—in six innings. He walked one and struck out four.

Derek Hill hit a solo homer for the Tigers.

Rangers 4, Rockies 3

In Arlington, Texas, A.J. Alexy pitched one-hit ball through five shutout inning and won his major league debut, DJ Peters, Leody Taveras and Nick Solak homered in consecutive innings and Texas beat Colorado.

Alexy (1-0) allowed only a second-inning double to C.J. Cron. The 23-year-old struck out four and walked three while throwing 81 pitches. Joe Barlow pitched a perfect ninth inning for his third save in three opportunities.

Local product Trevor Story hit a solo homer in the seventh inning and a two-run shot in the eighth for Colorado.

German Marquez (11-10) gave up all four runs on seven hits in six innings.

Uncertainty abounds in AFC South as Titans attempt to repeat

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—There's more uncertainty than usual surrounding the AFC South, and it extends beyond Houston quarterback Deshaun Watson.

The NFL's lone division with two playoff teams in each of the last four years is dealing with significant changes heading into the 2021 season. Two new head coaches, three new offensive coordinators, three new quarterbacks and several prominent cleats to fill could put the South's postseason streak in jeopardy.

Throw in a few key preseason injuries and it's hard to predict how the division will shake out.

This much is clear: Derrick Henry and the Tennessee Titans are favored to repeat, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, despite replacing OC Arthur Smith, who took the head job in Atlanta, and revamping a defense that was one of the worst in franchise history.

"To win this division, you go to Nashville and you see what the Titans have," Jaguars defensive coordinator Joe Cullen said.

Tennessee's offseason was relatively uneventful compared to what transpired in Indianapolis, Houston and Jacksonville.

In an Aug. 2, 2021 file photo, Texans quarterback Deshaun Watson practices with the team during NFL football practice in Houston. AP

Colts quarterback Philip Rivers retired after a one-year stint that ended on wild-card weekend. Offensive coordinator Nick Sirianni then left to take over in Philadelphia, which later traded oft-injured quarterback Carson Wentz to Indy.

The deal reunited Wentz and Colts head coach Frank Reich, who worked closely together during Wentz's breakout 2017 season in Philly.

But the move looked questionable a few months later when Reich revealed Wentz needed surgery to remove a bone fragment from his left foot. And that was just one of many injury woes for the Colts, who have linebacker Darius Leonard (ankle), guard Quenton Nelson (foot), left tackle Eric Fisher (Achilles) and defensive lineman Dayo Odeyingbo (Achilles) recovering from surgery. They also are dealing with COVID-19 issues.

Houston and Jacksonville, meanwhile, dealt with coaching turnovers that could lead to more roster upheaval.

The Texans fired Bill O'Brien in midseason 2020 and replaced him with first-time head coach David Culley. They said goodbye to superstar defensive lineman J.J. Watt.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	83	48	.634	_
New York	76	55	.580	7
Boston	75	58	.564	9
Toronto	69	61	.531	13½
Baltimore	40	90	.308	42½

Central Division

Chicago	76	56	.576	_
Cleveland	64	64	.500	10
Detroit	62	70	.470	14
Kansas City	59	71	.454	16
Minnesota	58	73	.443	17½

West Division

Houston	78	53	.595	_
Oakland	72	59	.550	6
Seattle	70	62	.530	8½
Los Angeles	65	67	.492	13½
Texas	46	85	.351	32

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Atlanta	70	60	.538	_
Philadelphia	67	64	.511	3½
New York	63	67	.485	7
Washington	55	75	.423	15
Miami	55	76	.420	15½

Central Division

Milwaukee	80	52	.606	_
Cincinnati	71	62	.534	9½
St. Louis	67	63	.515	12
Chicago	57	75	.432	23
Pittsburgh	48	83	.366	31½

West Division

San Francisco	84	47	.641	_
Los Angeles	83	49	.629	1½
San Diego	70	62	.530	14½
Colorado	60	71	.458	24
Arizona	44	89	.331	41

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SIXERS

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National team hopeful Jack Aranda got the ball rolling for the Sixers as the stocky guard shot the lights out and scored 15 points in the first half, including three 3-pointers, to give his team a comfortable 42-29 spread.

Richard McWilliams tried to keep The Game's head above water, torching defenders with 13 markers of his own that was spiked by two triples in the first 20 minutes of action.

The team from San Antonio continued to be aggressive especially on defense at the start of the second half. That plan seemed to have backfired though as Josh Andrew and Ton Laraja fouled out and Jaymark De Guzman played majority of the final 20 minutes with four fouls.

Good thing the Sixers had a wide margin and they were able to hold on to the lead with plenty to spare thanks to the all-around play of Khristian Itaas. The athletic guard took over where Aranda got off, firing 15 of his game-high 22 points in the second half to help his team advance to the championship.

Aranda back-stopped Itaas with 21 points, while Jun Fidelino added 13 markers of his own. McWilliams led The Game in the loss with 19 markers with Erik Joe adding 12 of his own.

In the first game, Ol'Aces banished Marianas Dental Center from further action following a 55-30 beatdown. The Oleai team jumped the gun on Marianas Dental from the get-go and led 28-17 after the first half before coasting to the 15-point win in the second half.

Douglas Schmidt and Coby Santos were the high-point men for Ol'Aces with 12 and 10 points, respectively. Sam Darag and Jecil Gant led Marianas Dental in their swan song with 8 markers apiece.

GMJ/IKKI also advanced to the next round after beating Jacob's Bakeshop & Barbecue, 53-45, in Sunday's second game. Both teams were evenly matched and it showed with Jacob's Bakeshop taking a 1-point lead, 27-25, at the half.

They continued to pace GMJ/IKKI until the mid-portion of the second half when Rodel Pastrana started to assert himself. With the power-playing guard getting his way inside the lane en route to scoring 8 points, GMJ/IKKI was able to wrestle away the lead from Jacob's Bakeshop and ultimately eliminated the latter from further play.

Pastrana scored 14 points in the win, while Ace Agustin chipped in 8 points. James Kintz led the way for Jacob's Bakeshop with 13 markers.

First Game

Ol'Aces 55 – Schmidt 12, Santos 10, P. Basa 8, Castro 6, Kabiriel 6, Bondoc 4, T. Basa 3, Atan 2, Deleon Guerrero 2, Rabauliman 2, Coldeen 2.

Marianas Dental 30 – Darag 8, Gant 8, Torres 5, Dancel 4, Matos 2, Ben 1.

Scoring by halves: 28-17, 55-30.

Second Game

GMJ/IKKI 53 – Pastrana 14, A. Agustin 8, Scaño 5, Sapo 5, Galang 5, Mangali 5, Fundador 4, Hipolito 3, Reyes 2, I. Agustin 2.

Jacob's Bakeshop & Barbecue 45 – Kintz 13, Lilues 9, Ong 8, Santos 6, Gaviola 3, Camacho 2, Perez 2, Moises 2.

Scoring by halves: 26-27, 53-45.

Third Game

San Antonio Sixers 90 – Itaas 22, Aranda 21, Fidelino 13, De Guzman 8, Laraja 7, Flores 6, Brennan 6, Andrew 5, Javier 2.

The Game 79 – McWilliams 19, Joe 12, Sagum 10, Cabaltica 7, Dayao 6, Blake 4, Arellano 4, Deleon Guerrero 3, Sablan 3.

Scoring by halves: 42-29, 90-79.

19 SCHOOLS

From Page 20

dates are reserved for the middle school category. The boys high school ISL will not start until October.

"We are excited for the new season and I am sure that our students will be more motivated to join the team and play because they will be wearing uniform with our school name on it," said Koblerville Elementary School coach-teacher Francis Mendiola.

Kagman High School principal Ben Jones, on the other hand, said having uniforms puts more prestige to the game and the league and signifies unity among the players.

"This is a great way to start the season, get things right, and encourage more students to play and compete at a higher level," added.

True partners

Ada thanked NMIFA under the leadership of Tan for their continued commitment and support to interscholastic sports.

Ada recalled that more than a decade ago Tan came to William S. Reyes Elementary School and donated soccer goals to encourage students to play. That's how Tan was determined to promote soccer to students and up to this day, Ada is pleased that the NMIFA head remains committed to that vision.

Gross, who oversees the interscholastic competition for PSS' side, said the NMIFA-PSS partnership has strengthened every season as both parties share a mutual goal of boosting the soccer program at the grassroots level and providing other opportunities for students.

"We will do our very best to bring as many students as we can to the pitch. Take care of them and continue to develop their skills and character," Gross said.

Tan thanked PSS and its leadership for encouraging their students to join the program and acknowledged that interscholastic sports is a critical component in the development and continued growth of NMI soccer. He added that it has been NMIFA's goal to see schools compete in full uniform to raise the standard of interscholastic sports in the islands and make players feel more honored in representing their schools.

Meanwhile, NMIFA executive director Ruselle Zapanta said NMIFA's donation was made possible through the help of the Japan Football Association and the family of the late Doc Altizer.

NMIFA was able to avail of JFA's Youth Development Program grant and used the fund to purchase uniform sets and provide additional support to the NMIFA/PSS Interscholastic Soccer League. Whit Altizer and his wife, Lindsey, on the other hand, held a fundraiser in honor of their late father, Doc, who used to be a coach and supporter of recreation sports. The Altizers raised $1,250 and donated them to NMIFA for the ISL and the Junior National Academy programs.

"We hope that kitting the players will bring added excitement, motivation, and pride for the schools playing in our soccer competitions. We know funding for schools towards interscholastic sports can be a challenge so we decided to help. The uniforms can be used outside of soccer as well if the schools choose to," Zapanta said.

Zapanta, NMIFA vice president Vickie Izuka, treasurer Elna Curate, deputy general secretary Merlie Tolentino, and NMIFA Executive Committee officials Wesley Bogdan and Catherine Attao-Toves were also present at the donation turnover ceremony.

LET'S

From Page 20

He went on to say that ISLA started in 2000 when Sablan, his brother, and a bunch of really close friends founded a club that would hold a competition for small boat owners that weren't able to participate in international derbies.

"They were not able to go out to the rough seas as much as larger boats so they felt why not do something for the fishermen that are usually fishing in-shore," he said.

Those competitions would eventually evolve into the first-ever Mafute Derby in 2018. "It started in 2018 and now 2021 this is where we're at. The first derby was about 15 boats, the second derby was 22 boats, and the third derby we're up to about 64 boats," said Tenorio.

He said ISLA's success wouldn't have been possible without Sablan's vision and guiding hand.

"I sure hope Mike is looking down smiling at us and just thinking about what a great job everybody has done and feeling good about the legacy he has left behind," he added.

In behalf of ISLA's members, Tenorio also extended his gratitude to their wives, most specially Sablan's widow.

"Any fisherman knows that you're ability to go out and fish won't be possible without your significant other, your family members, and there's one lady that stood by Mike's side when we started this, our sister Bon, and their kids—Liam, Bon-Bon, and Donna—thank you all for coming out."

ISLA vice president Ross Arriola seconded Tenorio and said the club is planning to hold a couples derby in the future so their wives can join in on the action.

He also paid tribute to Sablan and said the record number of boats this year is an acknowledgment of how loved the late ISLA president was in the fishing community.

"That's all because of one man who had a vision and that's our late president Mike Palaksi. Last year was a very difficult year as ISLA went through rough waters. Not only did we suffer through a pandemic but we also suffered through the loss of our captain. He wasn't with us but he was with us in spirit. We were very fortunate that a few people stepped up. I want to thank our current president, J.D. Tenorio, for taking the helm and taking over the captain's quarters and leading us through this derby," said Arriola.

Sablan's daughter, Bon-Bon, best summed up the entire mood of last Saturday's fishing derby as it served as an impromptu tribute to his father.

"His goal was always to make this mufute derby better each time. With 64 registered this year I'm proud to say that we have achieved that goal for him. We are saddened by his absence today but thank God that in knowing that he's got the best seat in the house, the best view of today's memorable event, and in celebration of this successful event this year let's continue to enjoy our Saturdays in his honor. So here's to bigger and better, Dad!" she said.

Uncertainty abounds in AFC South as Titans attempt to repeat

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

After US Open loss, Murray calls Tsitsipas breaks 'nonsense'

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Northern Mariana Islands Football Association officers, Public School System officials, and representatives from elementary, middle, and high schools gather for a group photo after the uniform donation turnover ceremony last Monday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville. ROSELYN B. MONROYO

19 schools receive soccer uniforms

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 19 schools under the CNMI Public School System will be playing in the 2021-2022 Interscholastic Soccer League in complete uniform after receiving their kits from Northern Mariana Islands Football Association last Monday evening.

The NMIFA donated soccer uniform sets to nine elementary schools, five middle schools, and five high schools on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan to further support the students' participation in the interscholastic sports program. NMIFA president Jerry Tan and general secretary Ross Zapanta presented the jersey, shorts, and socks to the representatives of the 19 schools. Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred A. Ada, associate commissioners Yvonne Pangelinan and Eric Magofna, and PSS Athletic Program director Nick Gross joined the two NMIFA officials in the donation turnover ceremony at the NMI Soccer Training Center.

Schools in the elementary division will be the first ones to try on their uniform as PSS and NMIFA plan to kick off the ISL season next week, on Wednesday. The middle school teams (boys) will have their turn also next week, on Thursday. Matches in the ISL elementary division will take place every Wednesday and Friday, while the Tuesday and Thursday play

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Sixers book finals seat; GMJ/IKKI win

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The San Antonio Sixers advanced to the finals of the NMI Rollers Basketball Association's Inaugural NMI Rollers Men's Basketball Tournament after repulsing The Game last Sunday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

The Sixers thus remained the only undefeated team in the tournament following its 90-79 romp over The Game, but more importantly got the all-important twice-to-beat advantage in the finals set for Sunday, Sept. 5.

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GMJ/IKKI guard Rodel Pastrana drives hard to the basket against a phalanx of Jacob's Bakeshop & Barbecue defenders during their NMI Rollers Basketball Association's Inaugural NMI Rollers Men's Basketball Tournament game last Sunday at the Koblerville Gymnasium. MARK RABAGO

The family of I Sanhalom Laguna Anglers Association late president Mike "Palaksi" Sablan poses for a group photo during the awards ceremony of the 2021 ISLA Mafute Derby last Saturday at the Smiling Cove Marina. MARK RABAGO

'Let's continue to enjoy our Saturdays in his honor'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Almost a year ago, I Sanhalom Laguna Anglers Association wasn't even sure they will be able to stage their annual Mafuti Derby.

Not only was the 2020 edition of the tournament cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the fishing club was also mourning the passing of its president Mike "Palaksi" Sablan.

Fast-forward to last Saturday and not only was ISLA able to hold the 2021 ISLA Mafuti Derby, they were also able to honor their founder's legacy by posting a record number of participants with 64 boats joining the one-day event.

No less than Sablan's fishing partner and now ISLA president, J.D. Tenorio, toasted the late president's legacy in a brief speech during the awards ceremony Saturday at the Smiling Cove Marina.

"We're honored to have you guys today and we're honored to have his family here today. It was an extremely difficult derby to kind of hold. We've been through a lot these past few years. We lost a good friend, a brother, and a family member. We just would like to thank you all for your support and for coming out today to honor Mike's legacy," he said.

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